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History of English Literature

E. J. Mathew

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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

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OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

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BY

E. J. MATHEW

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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

I. INTRODUCTION.

The Beginnings of English Literature. The Difficulties attending them. The Advisability of taking Chaucer as our Starting Point. The Necessity of Knowing the Outlines of Earlier Days before even Chaucer is attempted.

ENGLISH LITERATURE may be said to begin with some fragments of poetry that date back as far as the fourth century; and, for the ten centuries following, our literature is extremely difficult to understand, because it is written either in Anglo-Saxon, or else in one of the dialects of Middle English. It took a thousand years for English literature to develop properly; and we do not come across any author who can be easily mastered until we arrive at the middle of the fourteenth century. Then we find Geoffrey Chaucer one of the greatest of our poets, who died in the year 1400. We cannot, however, properly appreciate even his work unless we know something of the condition of English between the fourth and the fourteenth centuries; and this knowledge we must try to obtain by learning a little about the principal things that happened to the language before Chaucer's time.

II. THE OLD ENGLISH TIMES.

1. The Teutonic Tribes in Britain. Nature of their Poetry. Alliteration, and what it means. How the Fragments of Ancient Songs have been preserved. Examples of them. "The Fight at Finnesburg," and "Beowulf."

We have to begin by thinking of the tribes that came over to Britain in the fifth century, and slowly transformed it into England. They were Teutonic tribes, and spoke various Teutonic tongues. Like all the other branches of the great family to which they belonged—the Aryan family—they possessed a

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literature consisting of a number of wild war-songs. These songs were quite unlike modern English poetry, since they had neither rhyme nor metre. In the place of rhyme there was a certain arrangement, known as alliteration, by which the same letter of the alphabet was made to recur in the accented parts of a line. Then, instead of a regular metre, there was only a kind of natural swing, produced by the accents in each couplet; but no restriction was laid on the number of feet, or syllables, as is the case in modern poetry.

The war-songs, in the ancient days, were handed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. Two or three of them were written down in Northumbria and Wessex during the seventh century, when those districts became Christianised; and one of the fragments so preserved, the *Fight at Finnesburg*, shows by its composition that it dates back to times probably long before the invasion of Britain.

A small piece of manuscript, containing the description of this fight, was discovered in the seventeenth century by Dr. George Hickes, in the Library of Lambeth Palace. It was pasted on the inside cover of a manuscript book of Homilies; and Dr. Hickes at once made a copy of it. The lines are valuable as giving a picture of the primitive civilisation that existed among the Teutonic tribes. Of these tribes, the Frisians lived on the west coast of Sleswick, and in the islands of the North Sea. Finn was king of the North Frisians, and dwelt at Finnesburg, his town in Jutland. His wife was Hildeburh, the daughter of a famous Dane; her brother, Hnaef, was a thane of the Danish king. The outbreak of an old tribal feud inspired Finn with a hatred for his brother-in-law, so he invited Hnaef to stay as a guest at Finnesburg, with the intention of putting him to death. Hnaef, suspecting nothing, went over with sixty men, accompanied by Hengest, the chief of his companions. The Danes were lodged in a great hall at Finnesburg; and one night, when they were all asleep, Finn and his men surrounded the building, and began the attack. Either Hnaef or Hengest was disturbed by the noise; for the "young and warlike king" mentioned in the manuscript found by Dr. Hickes is clearly one of them. Springing from his couch, he gives the alarm to his sleeping comrades:

"Then cried the young and war-like king,
'This is not day dawning, nor flies here the dragon;
but now bear forth our deadly foes
their ready equipments. The ravens croak;
the gray burnie clinks, the shields rattle,
shield answers shaft. Now shines the moon,

Burnie, a coat of mail, made of chain rings.

full moon beneath the clouds ;
which a folk's feud will follow.
my warriors—think on valour ;
on to the front ;
heroes and thanes.'
a thane gold-laden,
Quick to the doors
and then Garulf
that they should not advance
but he enquired, all unconceal'd,
and the valiant warrior
' Sigeferth is my name.
a widely known warrior.
and battles severe.
it is decreed for thee.'
Black and dark-coloured,
Bravely they fought
likewise five nights,
now arise, sad deeds,
Wake ye now,
loose your hands ;
be ye courageous,
Then rose there many
girt with his sword.
went the lordly warriors ;
Guthere admonished
to the hall-door in armour ;
' Who holds the door ? '
who held the door cried,
I am Chief of the Secgas ;
Many woes have I endured
Whatever thou seek'st from me
Then was the sound of slaughter . . .
the raven hovered round . . .
for five days,
and the door held."

Garulf and Guthere, two of Finn's men.
Secgas, a Danish tribe.

The conflict was bitter, and Hnaef was slain ; but Hengest, who took over the command, fought on until nearly all Finn's men were killed. When the strife was over, the son of Finn and Hildeburh was found among the dead. Peace was made between Finn and Hengest ; pledges and blood-money were taken ; and the bodies of Hnaef and of Hildeburh's son were burnt on the same pyre. Hildeburh, however, had lost her brother at the hands of her husband ; as well as her own son, who had fought against Hnaef. Though the peace lasted for a time, Finn's treachery could never be forgiven ; and in the end he met with his due reward.

Far more famous is the story of *Beowulf*, a tale brought over by the Northern tribes that settled in Northumbria during the fifth century, though the version that we possess seems to have been put into Old English by a poet of a later date. *Beowulf*, even as it stands, is famous for its character and merits. Like all the old songs, it is full of references to the terrors of the wild country and the dark night. These, to the English, were the habitation of dreadful ghosts, of unfriendly spirits, and of evil demons. Such horrors, created by their fear of the unknown, haunted, in their belief, all the forest and the fen. Wild beasts and human enemies lurked in the darkness to do harm. Life was a constant terror, and death a constant foe.

The poem gives an account of Hrothgar, King of the Danes ; of the palace that he built ; of his wealth and treasures ; and of the trouble brought upon him by a monster called Grendel, "he that held the moor, the fen, and the fastnesses." The daughters of Cain, so the legend ran, had brought forth in

darkness all kinds of strange horrors—giants and elves and supernatural creatures—who for a long time fought against God, and were denied admission to the houses of men; Grendel was one of these. The real meaning of this legend is probably that Grendel was a huge and savage polar bear. The name signifies the Destroyer—literally the Grinder.

For twelve years, however, the King of the Scyldings, or Danes, endured the ravages and spoliation of Grendel without being able to capture him, or to check his evil doings. The news of the disaster caused in Hrothgar's territory spread to all the neighbouring districts; and at last, one morning, the warder of the Scyldings, whose duty it was to guard the seashore, saw a strange ship approach, filled with armed men. He instantly gave the alarm, and Hrothgar's thane, or governor of the district, went down at once to meet the ship; "with might he shook the strong spear in his hand." He demanded from the strangers whence they had come, and what was their purpose; and their leader, a tall and handsome young man, answered for them, "We are of the Goths' kind, Hygelac's hearth-sharers; my father was widely known, a high-born lord hight Ecgtheow." Then the thane knew that this young man was Beowulf; and led him gladly up to the king. Hrothgar was sitting, bald and old, when his thane approached and told of the stranger's coming. Hrothgar welcomed him eagerly and showed him the highest honours; and Wealtheow, the queen, with her own hands, passed him the mead-cup at the banquet.

Grendel, that same night, determined to attack the palace. He little realised how dangerous was the new foe that had arrived. These are the lines describing his hasty traverse of the moorland, and his furious entrance into the king's wine-hall:

"Then from the moor,
came Grendel—
The wicked one thought
in that high hall
He strode, hidden by the mist,
stood, the gold-hall of men,
That was not the first time
but never before,
bolder warriors, hall thanes,
Came then this fiend,
up to the hall;
though fast in its fire-bands,
thus burst the death-bringer,—
the door of the hall."

under misty hills,
God's wrath was upon him.
that among the men
some he might slay.
to where he knew the wine-hall
shining with bright jewels.
he had sought the wine-hall,
nor at any time after,
did he find.
deprived of all joy,
and quickly the door fell,
when his claws touched it;
since he was angry,

Hight, named, called.

A horrible scene ensued. Grendel, seizing one of the sleeping men, bit him through the body, drank his blood, and tore off his

flesh in great pieces; then, advancing, sought to grip Beowulf. He, however, had been awakened, and was on the alert, and laid hold of the monster with his two hands. The grip of Beowulf was miraculous. He had purposely avoided arming himself with a sword, for Grendel was possessed of a charm that made all steel harmless to him. Beowulf trusted to his own muscular strength; and, tearing the creature's shoulder open, he broke its sinews, and rendered it helpless. Grendel could only limp away, the blood pouring from him, and leave his track across the marsh of the sea-monsters, as he made his way to his den in their lake. He sank dead in the water before reaching his mother's cavern. Then the surge boiled with blood, and the waves were hot with gore.

The excitement in Heorot, the great hall, was intense. Beowulf was rewarded with every kind of gift and honour, and was given a palace to pass the next night in. That night, however, Grendel's mother, mad with grief at the slaughter of her monster son, came up to Heorot, and broke into the hall. The noise of her entrance woke all the Scyldings who were sleeping there, yet she had time to kill one, the counsellor of Hrothgar the king. She escaped unscathed in the tumult; but Beowulf was called from his sleep, and prepared at once to pursue.

He clad himself in ring-mail, and plunged boldly into the morass, where the tracks of Grendel showed the entrance of the den. Down through the deep water he sank; then the witch, the mother of Grendel, saw him and clutched him, but could not break through his mail. She seized and carried him into her hall, where was no water. He struck hard with his war-sword, but the edge failed, and he flung the sword on the earth in his wrath, and trusted only to the strength of his grip. Grendel's mother clasped and threw him, and drew a dagger which she sought to plunge into his breast. But he saw hanging in her hall an old sword, the work of the giants—a magic sword, greater than any man might carry in war. He seized the hilt, and struck her fiercely across the throat. Her neck bones broke, and she fell dead across the floor. Looking round the hall, he saw Grendel's corpse lying of life deprived, and with a mighty stroke he cut off the monster's head. The corpse rolled far away, but the venomous blood melted the sword-blade, until nothing was left except the hilt.

The Scyldings had waited with King Hrothgar on the bank, while Beowulf was down in the cave. When the blood surged up and tinged the water, they cried out that Beowulf was slain; but, as they shouted, he came diving through, and swam to land, and laid triumphantly at their feet his trophies of the sword-hilt and of Grendel's head.

The poem, in many verses, relates the successes of Beowulf when he returned to his native land, and tells of how he grew wealthy and powerful, and of how he became a king, and ruled for fifty years.

2. Effect produced by Christianity on the Old English Poetry. Cædmon's Bible-Stories and Hymn.

After Christianity was introduced into England, at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh centuries, English poetry was written in an entirely different manner from that of the war-songs. This was because the monks, the only people who copied out the ancient verses, turned away from the stories of bloodshed, and preserved nothing except a few poems which dealt with sacred matters. The earliest piece of poetry that we have belonging to this time is a fragment of a poem by a shepherd at Whitby, named Cædmon, which is in the form of a paraphrase of Bible history.

English during the seventh century was too incomplete for any one to dream of using it in a translation of the Bible. But Cædmon knew many of the old alliterative Teutonic songs, which he and his comrades were accustomed to sing at their feasts; and the idea occurred to him that he might be able to turn some of the Bible stories into verse of a similar kind. After he had made several attempts, his friends in the Abbey of Whitby heard of his efforts, and willingly translated for him portions of the *Vulgate*, from which he produced a great book of rough and rugged poetry.

Cædmon shows how little the English were, up to that time, touched by the teaching of Christianity. His paraphrase resembles *Beowulf* both in character and execution, for the heathen spirit is strongly marked in it. At the same time, there are to be found passages of a true devotional feeling, and nowhere is this more clearly shown than in the famous hymn with which the book begins.

"Now must we glorify
the Maker's might,
the work of the Glorious Father,
the ever-living Lord
He erst created
Heaven as a high roof,
then the mid-world,
Eternal Lord,
dry land for men,
the guardian of Heaven,
and His mind's thought,
when of each of His wonders
ordered the origin.
for earth's children
Holy Creator;
the Guardian of mankind,
afterwards did prepare
God Almighty.

The following are some of the lines attributed to Cædmon, giving an account of the outbreak of the Flood:

"Noah, son of Lamech,
when, with his children,
had six hundred winters,
he on the ark entered

the young with the old,
was dear to the people.
rain from the heavens;
from every vein;
the sea uprose
Strong was and fierce,
covered the men of earth
Their thoughts of wrong
the strong sea swept
forty days,
the fierce punishment
The waves drove
from their flesh-coverings.
heaved high the ark;
under the welkin,
the dwelling most excellent,
Danger must not,
violently touch
The Holy God
who, by God's hest,
The Lord sent
the well-springs broke
the ocean-streams burst forth;
over the shores.
He that ruled the waters,
with the wan wave.
the Creator avenged;
on the fated folk,
as many nights;
was grim to men.
the wicked ones' lives
Flood covered the hills,
then wide rode,
over the ocean's ring,
fared with its freight.
with terrors of water,
the wave-wanderer.
led and preserved them."

Hest, command.
Welkin, the sky; the vault of heaven.
Fared, travelled; went.

3. The Various Dialects of Old English.

Cædmon's poems were written in Northumbrian dialect, and we must be careful to bear in mind one great fact attaching to the Old English times—that there was never one definite language which belonged to the whole country, until a long time after the Norman conquest. There were special dialects used in special districts; and, though they all had a general resemblance to one another, strongly marked differences still existed between them. In many cases the people speaking in one dialect might hardly have been able to understand the people speaking in another.

As we have said, Cædmon's dialect was the Northumbrian, which was spoken in that part of England which lies north of the river Humber. It was brought over by Anglian tribes, who came from the district now known as the Duchy of Sleswick. In this dialect the guttural sounds were very distinctly marked, and have been long preserved. The Northerners to this day speak of a *kirk* and a *brig*, where Southerners and Midlanders say *church* and *bridge*. At one time the Northumbrian literature was considerable in its extent, but very little of it has survived to modern times.

The second dialect was the Mercian, spoken in England between the Humber and the Thames. It was probably to a large extent of Frisian origin, for the kingdom of Mercia in Anglo-Saxon times was founded by Frisians, who formed one of the Saxon tribes; and the Old Friesic of the continent very

closely resembled the Mercian in England. The Mercian afterwards developed into the Midland dialect, and became the forerunner of modern standard English. The following couplet in every word is at the present both Friesic and English:

"Good butter and good cheese
Is good English and good Fries."

The third dialect was the Wessex, which was spoken south of the Thames, and was brought in by Saxon tribes, who crossed the channel from the lower parts of the Rhine and the Weser. This was the mother tongue of Alfred the Great, and for nearly two centuries after his death remained as the standard form of English. In the old period of English, but not in the middle, this dialect held the most prominent place, and a considerable literature has survived, but it ceased to be used for literary purposes before the modern period began.

There was a fourth dialect, spoken in Kent, which was very similar to the Wessex dialect, but had yet a character of its own. It is possible that Kent was peopled by a Frisian tribe, and that Kent was afterwards so thickly populated by a Saxon element from Wessex that the two dialects underwent a partial amalgamation.

The terms Old English and Anglo-Saxon require some attention. They are often used as if they meant the same thing. This, however, is not the case, for Anglo-Saxon is merely another name for the Wessex dialect, while by Old English we mean the whole of the four dialects spoken in England before the Norman Conquest. To recapitulate, these are (1) Northumbrian, brought in by the Angles; (2) Mercian, probably brought in by the Frisians; (3) Wessex, or Anglo-Saxon, brought in by the Saxons; (4) Kentish dialect, of uncertain origin. These four, taken together, make up Old English.

4. The Change brought about by the Latin Schools. The Influence on Old English effected by the Introduction of Words which translated the Latin Words. The Literary Work of the Period. Wilfrith and the Venerable Bede.

A great change began late in the seventh century when Latin schools, set up by Italian monks, were instituted in England. The Roman missionaries brought with them much literature of a kind hitherto unknown by the English. Its books, written at Rome, were far advanced in their knowledge of philosophy and history. The dialects of Old English had so far been virtually restricted to verse, since they were not fitted for dealing with reflective work, and were only strong enough to express the simplest ideas in the simplest words. The new literature of the next century, composed under the direction of the Roman mis-

sionaries, had therefore to be written in Latin, a fact which after some lapse of time produced an enormous effect upon English. The young monks, led by their new masters, were compelled to familiarise themselves with Latin; and this led to the invention and introduction of compounds in their own tongue which corresponded with the abstract terms of the Latin. Hence "by the beginning of the eleventh century the West Saxon speech of Alfred and his successors had grown into a comparatively wealthy dialect, suitable for the expression of many ideas unfamiliar to the pirates and farmers of East Anglia."

The literature of this period commenced with a Latin biography of Wilfrith, Bishop of Hexham, who died in 709; but the chief work of its school was done by the Venerable Bede.

Bede was born near Wearmouth during the life-time of Cædmon, and spent his life as a scholar at Jarrow on the banks of the Tyne. Here was a monastery of the Benedictine order closely connected with Rome, and well supplied from the Roman libraries. Bede, taking to the art of letters, produced over forty books, the majority of them in Latin; but his translation into English prose of St. John's Gospel and his English verses which have come down to us, show that the old Teutonic spirit was never extinct in him. The most celebrated of his works is his *History of the English Church*, a Latin book famous for its breadth of view and for the simple truthfulness with which it is told. The well-known account of Bede's death, written by Cuthbert his pupil, is perhaps the most beautiful relic that we possess of Old English times. A most curious piece of verse in the Northumbrian dialect, said to have been chanted by Bede when he was dying, has been fortunately preserved.

> "Before his compulsory journey, before his departure,
> Nothing is wiser than for a man to consider
> Whether his spirit, after the day of death,
> May be judged worthy of good or of evil."

5. The Fall of Northumbria, and the State of Literature until the rise of Wessex.

During the eighth century the literary movement in the North and Midlands, which had so far been extremely successful, was entirely shattered by the ruin of Northumbria and the invasions of the Danes. In 787 the first Danish, or rather Norwegian, ships arrived, and England was harried until Alfred's treaty with Guthrum in 879. The principal works that have been saved from this unhappy century are the *Laws of Ine*, King of Wessex; and of Offa, King of Mercia; the *Penitentials* of the Church; the *Charters*; and various devotional poems. Many of the latter are preserved in two books, one of which is kept at

Exeter, and the other at Vercelli, in the north of Italy. They are both collections of sacred songs. The first was presented to the library of Exeter Cathedral by Bishop Leofric some eight hundred years ago. The second was found at the beginning of this century in the monastery at Vercelli, where an Englishman had probably left it a thousand years before.

Although the active state of literature was suspended through all these years, the fame of English learning was carried on to the continent, and especially into Germany, by two celebrated Englishmen. The first of these was Winfrith, a Devonshire man —better known by his Latin name of Boniface—who went to Rome in his younger days, in 715, and received a commission to convert the heathen tribes of Germany. To this work he devoted his life, and eventually became the first Archbishop of Mainz. He died in 755 from an attack made upon him by a band of Pagans. Alcuin, the other of these two men, settled in Germany from the school in York, and remained on the continent till his death in 804. He was the secretary and confidential friend of the famous Emperor Charles the Great.

The only English poet of any importance during the period was Cynewulf, some of whose work is preserved in the Exeter book. It is chiefly remarkable for the dissimilarity between it and *Beowulf*. The feeling of the old war songs is entirely absent; and Cynewulf's interest in the country seems more artificial than natural. The following extract illustrates this defect:

The Happy Land.

"I have heard
away to the east,
well known by fame,
to earth-dwellers
is not accessible.
by the might of the Maker
Lovely is all its plain,
amidst the most beautiful
excellent is that island;
brave, rich in power
There, before the blessed,
revealing wonderful sounds,
That is a winsome land,
spacious under the heavens.
nor the breath of frost,
nor the fall of hail,
nor the heat of the sun,
nor hot weather,
ever happen,
sound and blessed.
abounding in fruit.
stand there steep,
that it is far hence
the most excellent of lands,
but the surface of its ground
throughout the world
It is removed
from those who do evil.
enclosed with joy,
fragrance of the earth;
mighty is the Maker,
Who created the land.
is often open,
the gate of Heaven.
with green forests,
Nor may rain nor snow,
nor the flame of fire,
nor the fall of rime,
nor perpetual cold,
nor winter storm,
but the land remains
It is a noble land,
Neither hills nor mountains
nor stony cliffs

high towering aloft,
nor valleys, nor dales,
nor mounds, nor hills,
nor anything rough;
flourishes under pleasant clouds,
On the grassy green
wonderfully adorned
No affliction happens
where the holy perfume
nor will it perish
until the old framework
which in the beginning
as with us;
nor hill-caves,
nor any slope,
but the blessed field
and abounds in joy.
stand lovely trees,
by the might of the Holy One.
to the wood on high,
continues in the land;
for ever and ever,
itself may end,
He constructed."

As a curiosity of Anglo-Saxon literature we may quote one of Cynewulf's *Riddles*, describing the manners and customs of the cuckoo:

"My father and mother left me
yet life, the life within me,
Then a female began
very gracious to me,
with her kindly aid helped me
Until, as my nature waxed
became strange
My protectress fed me
soon was I able
Her own children
because she so did."
on this day for dead;
was not yet gone out of me.
to cover me well with a dress,
fostered me and protected me;
as if I were her own child.
to be under shelter,
to my strong spirit.
till that I grew up;
to travel a long journey.
loved she the less,

Cynewulf's work seems to have been done chiefly between the years 750 and 780. The religious poems attributed to him are regarded as his best. To four of them, *Juliana*, the *Christ*, the *Fates of the Apostles*, and the *Elene*, he signed his name; the *Dream of the Rood*, supposed to be the last of his productions, is not so well authenticated. It is the account of a dream in which Cynewulf saw the Cross of our Saviour; and is a good example of its kind:

"I, there lying
sadly looked
until I heard
began, then, words to speak
'Long since it was,
that I was cut down
moved from my roots.
toiled to make me a display,
to bear me on their shoulders,
many foemen fastened me there.
hasten, with much courage,
Then I durst not,
bow or burst asunder,
the surface of the earth.
his foes have felled;
Prepared himself then the youth
strong and fixed of mood;
a long while
on the Saviour's tree
that it spoke;
the holiest tree.
(still it I remember,)
at the end of the forest,
Seized me there strong enemies,
ordered their slaves to lift me,
till that they set me on a hill;
Saw I then the Lord of mankind
that he would on me ascend.
against the word of the Lord,
though I might see tremble
Verily I might
yet I stood fast.
that was God Almighty,
He ascended the high gallows,

brave in the sight of many,
I trembled when me He embraced;
or fall to the surface of the earth;
As a Rood was I reared;
The Lord of Heaven;
They drove dark nails through me;
of envious blows;
They insulted us both;
flooding from the youth's side
Many upon that hill
of grievous fates;
cruelly suffer;
with heavy clouds
The bright light
wan under the clouds.
mourned their King's slaughter.
Then there quickly
men to him alone;
sore was I with sorrow afflicted;
humbly, with all my power.
lifted Him from that hard torment;
to stand, covered with moisture.

The Rood, the Cross.
Wan, pale.

that He mankind might save.
yet durst I not bend to earth,
but fast should I stand.
the king of high rank I lifted
I dared me not stoop.
on me may be seen the wounds
nor durst I them hurt.
with blood was I all besmeared,
after He had given up the ghost.
did I endure
I saw the God of men
darkness had concealed
the great King's corpse.
in the shadow was lost,
All creation wept,
Christ was on the Rood.
from afar came
I that all beheld;
I bowed to the hands of the men,
Then took they Almighty God,
the warriors left me alone
I was all wounded with arrows."

6. The Rise of Wessex. West Saxon becomes the Standard Dialect of England. Alfred's Work with regard to Literature.

After many years of suffering through the whole of England an opportunity at last came to Wessex. The line of kings who made England one were Wessex men. Their capital was Winchester, and the language spoken at their court was West Saxon. Under Alfred, Winchester grew into the intellectual centre of England, and the Wessex dialect consequently won the position of standard English. This position it held during the century and three-quarters which elapsed between Alfred's death and the Norman Conquest.

It was a significant sign that in Alfred's reign all the new literature of the time was written in the West Saxon dialect, and not in Latin—a proof how much the language had been improved, both in idiom and in vocabulary, by the Latin schools of the previous century. West Saxon was also used, not only for the new books, but for making modern versions of the older works, such as the poems of Cædmon and his contemporaries.

Alfred, however, found that there were very few English books existing for his people to read; so, aided by his learned men, he caused to be translated from Latin into English certain writings which he deemed it advisable for his subjects to know.

These included Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care*, the *Comfort of Philosophy* of Boethius, the *History* of Orosius, and the *English Church History* of Bede. Alfred also had the record of his reign in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* made remarkably full; and gave so much attention to the art of letters that, at his death, England had a literature superior to any other that then existed among the spoken languages of Europe.

During the reigns of his descendants a large quantity of native work was produced in Wessex, the greater part of it dealing with religious subjects. The chief writer of the time was Ælfric, Abbot of Evesham, whose *Homilies*, of which the first set was completed in the year 990, represent the highest attainment of classical Wessex prose.

The following passages are taken from his famous sermon for Innocents' Day, and show well his power of plain and direct narrative:

"Now, to-day God's congregations throughout all the world proclaim the festival of the Happy Children, whom, on account of Christ's birth, the cruel Herod slew with wicked persecution, as the Gospel narrative distinctly tells. . . . The Gospel says that Rachel wept for her children, and would not be comforted, because they were not.

"Rachel was the name of the wife of Jacob, one of the patriarchs, and she signified God's congregations, who weep for their spiritual children; and she would not be comforted, yet she afterwards to the earthly conflict returned; there she once with victorious death overcame the world, and escaped her misery, to be crowned with Christ.

"In truth, the wicked Herod did not injure his sovereignties with lasting health, but without delay became so divinely punished that, in manifold misery, he died. He also showed, by his torments, that, after death, he was again eternally to suffer. He suffered from an indescribable disease; his body burned without with lasting heat, and all his inward parts were swollen and broken. His great lust was for food, yet with no food could he his appetite appease. He wheezed terribly, and drew painful sighs, as if he could with difficulty breathe. . . .

"When he realised that his life was hopeless, he summoned the elders of Israel from every town, and ordered them to be shut up in a prison. Then he called to him his sister Salome, and her husband Alexander, and said: 'I know that these Jewish people will make great rejoicings at my death; so soon as I die, slay all the Jewish elders that I have closed in the prison, and their relations will be compelled to lament.' On the next day, when he felt the approach of death, he demanded that his dagger should be given him wherewith to peel an apple, and violently stabbed himself with it, so that he died. Such was the death of Herod, who wickedly plotted against the coming of the heavenly messenger, and the innocent little children ruthlessly killed.

"Behold, then, God's angel, after Herod's death, appeared to Joseph in a dream in Egypt, and spake to him, saying, 'Arise, take thy child and his mother together, and go thy way to the land of Israel. Verily, those have departed, who before plotted thy child's life.' He then arose, as the angel bade, and bore the child with its mother to the land of Israel. Then Joseph learned that Archelaus ruled in Judea after his brother Herod,

and dared not approach his presence. Yet was he afterwards reminded in a dream that he should go to Galilee, because that land was not so near to the king, although it was in his kingdom. The child then dwelt in the town called Nazareth, that the words of the prophet should be fulfilled, which said that he should be called the Nazarene. The angel quoth to Joseph, 'Those have departed who before sought the life of the child.' With these words he showed that many of the elders of the Jews had before contemplated killing Christ; and it happened very rightly that they, with their wicked lord, had all perished.

"I will not this discourse too long continue, lest you should think it tedious; but ask your intercession at this Martyrdom of the Innocents. These are they that follow Christ in white robes whithersoever He goes; and they stand before His throne, without any defilement, having their palm-branches in their hands, and they sing the new hymn to the glory of the Almighty, who loves them, and reigns to the world without end. Amen."

The contrast between Ælfric and Wulfstan, Archbishop of York, from 1002 to 1023, is curiously marked. Wulfstan in his famous *Address to the English*, on the demoralisation caused by the Danish inroads, uses an impassioned and half-poetical diction, which marks the great change that was coming in English prose.

"Belovèd men, understand ye what truth is; this world is in haste, and is nearing to its end, and therefore it is that the longer it lasts, the worse it will be; and so it will, necessarily, through the sins of the people, get worse day by day, until the coming of the anti-Christ; then, indeed, will it be fearsome and horrible throughout the world.

"Understand also that the Devil has led this people away now for many years; and that little faith remains with men, though they often speak fair; and many an unrighteous thing prevails on the land; and there never a single man who thought over a remedy as one should. And daily the people have incurred one evil after the other, and have agreed to many unright laws throughout the whole nation. And we also for them have endured many insults and losses; and if we should discuss any remedy, then might we deserve from God better than we have done so far. Because with great merit we deserved the miseries that assail us, and with much merit, we might obtain remedy from God, if it can henceforth be improved. What we know for a certainty is this, that much breaking needs much mending; and a great burning requires much water, if one will quench that fire at all. And there is much need always to each man that he takes notice of God's law hence forth better than he did before, and rightly carries out the laws of God. . . .

"A historian who lived in the days of the Britons, named Gildas, wrote, concerning their misdeeds, how they with their sins so excessively irritated God, that He let out the English host to conquer their land, and the flower of the British nation they destroyed for ever. And that was accomplished, as he said to them, through learned breach of rules and unlearned robbery, through reckless dishonesty, through avarice of unjust acquisition, through the bad laws of princes and through breach of laws, through the sloth and imprudence of the bishops and through the wicked cowardice of the messengers of God who often kept silence of all the truth and mumbled with their jaws when they should have called aloud; through the foul pride, also, of the people, and through their gluttony

and manifold sins, by which they ruined the land, but obtained advantage for themselves.

"Then let us do what is necessary for us, and take warning from such; and this is true that I say to you, worse deeds with the English we know to have happened than we have ever heard of concerning the Britons; and therefore is there much need that we bethink ourselves, and eagerly reconcile ourselves with God. Let us do what is needful for us, and incline ourselves to the right; and in some measure fear and amend the unright, and mend very quickly that which before we have broken. Let us creep to Christ, and with trembling heart often explain, and come to deserve His mercy."

7. Summary of Old English Times.

With the deaths of Ælfric and Wulfstan in the eleventh century, we come close to the end of the Old English times; and it is necessary to pause for a little, and to think over what we have read before proceeding to the year that followed the Norman Cŏnquest.

We saw how the first attempts at literature were the war-songs of the Teutonic tribes, who came over and possessed themselves of Britain. They were originally composed in one of the various dialects of the Teutons; and then versions of them, in quite different dialects, were made up in other parts of England. We have also seen which were the most important of these Old English dialects.

Next we came to a cause of great change in the Old English tongue—from the Latin words introduced by Christianity and by the teaching of the Latin schools. The work of the Venerable Bede showed especially the influences exercised on English scholars by this movement. The disasters affecting Northumbria in the eighth century entirely destroyed the literary work of the North of England, and little was done until Wessex, in the south, could come to the front, when a great literary revival began during the reign of Alfred. This meant that the West Saxon dialect became the standard language, in which is written the bulk of the literature that has come down to us from the days before the Conquest. We must not, however, forget that the invasions of the Danes, and their final settlements in the North and East Midlands affected the English dialects in those parts by helping to break down their inflections.

Towards the end of the eighth century the Danes had begun to harass the coasts. By the end of the next century they had conquered and settled East Anglia, Mercia, and Northumbria; but in the following century, the tenth, they were forced to acknowledge the supremacy of the West Saxon kings. In 1016 the whole of England was conquered by them, and Danish kings ruled for nearly fifty years. The Anglo-Saxon line was then restored in the person of Edward the Confessor (1042); but

with his accession the Norman influence upon the language began. It was not, however, until the close of Old English times that Scandinavian words appeared in the language, and that the alteration brought about by the Danes had chiefly to do with the breaking down of inflections.

8. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and the end of the Old English Prose.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which is the oldest extant history in its own language of any Teutonic race, was in all probability first compiled in Alfred's court. The earlier part is little more than a collection of genealogies of the West Saxon kings, with a few extracts from Bede. In the reign of Alfred's father it becomes more copious; but the entries are dry statements of fact, wanting in comment and remark. During the prosperous times of the West Saxon kings, several war-songs of the Old English type were inserted. In the reign of Ethelred the *Chronicle* becomes fuller, while the style greatly increases as time goes on; for, by the early years of the eleventh century, the writers had become well accustomed to dealing with historical matter in their own tongue. Several manuscript versions of the *Chronicle* are in existence, differing from one another in certain small points, though on the main facts they all agree. Nearly all of them continue until the reign of William the Conqueror, but one carries on its narrative to the reign of Stephen, and then, in 1154, breaks off with an unfinished sentence. This entry marks the death of Old English.

The Battle of Brunanburh.

Athelstan, the grandson of Alfred, was attacked in 937 by a strong combination of the Danes of Northumberland, the Danes from Ireland, the Scotch, and the Welsh. He defeated them in a famous battle fought at Brunanburh, a place whose situation is not accurately known; but it may perhaps be Brunton near to Newcastle-on-Tyne, close by the Roman Wall. This victory, won against Anlaf of Ireland, Constantine of Scotland, and Owen of Cumberland, was celebrated by the person then keeping the *Chronicle* in a famous song.

"Here Athelstan king,
bracelet-giver to heroes,
Edmund the Atheling,
life-long glory,
by Brunnanbury.
they hewed the war warriors,
offspring of Edward,
from their forefathers,
against every foeman,
lord of earls,
and his brother also,
won in slaughter
with edges of swords
The phalanx they clave;
with hammered steel;
such was their lineage
that in the fight often,
the land they defended,

the hoard and the houses.
the Scots men and ship men
The field was flooded
Since the sun was up
The planet glorious
God's bright lamp,
until, mighty creature,

"There lay many
the Northern men
until many Scotsmen
The West Saxons always
followed behind
The foe they hewed
With mill-sharp swords.
refused hard hand-play
who with King Anlaf

"On the battle-stead,
lay dead, and seven earls
and countless men.

"So too the brothers,
King and Etheling,
West Saxon's land,
They left behind them,
the dark-coated kite,
the white-tailed eagle,
and the grey-beast,
Nor was ever more slaughter
of people slain,
by edges of swords,
and old writers,
over the broad sea,
Britain sought,
and the Welsh overcame,
and this land obtained."

The foe fell in battle,
doomed to death, fell.
with warriors' blood
at morning tide.
glided over the ground,
the eternal Lord's,
it sank to its settle.
pierced with the javelins;
shot over their shields
were wearied of war.
all the day through
the hated foe.
behind, amain,
The Mercians never
to any heroes
this land had sought.
five youthful kings
of Anlaf's host

both together,
their own land sought,
in the war exulting.
the corpse to devour,
the swarthy raven,
the greedy hawk,
the wolf of the wood.
on this island
before this,
as books tell us,
since hither from eastwards
Angles and Saxons
mighty war-smiths,
earls most bold,

Settle, seat, resting place.

9. The Conquest, and the Influence of Norman-French.

In 1066 came the Norman Conquest, and with it the strongest influence that has ever been exercised on the English character, the English speech, or the English thought. The result was not worked out in a day; it took centuries to accomplish the task; but the difference it made to England was plainly marked from the beginning.

The English language was not immediately swept away. The Old English dialects made a long and brave fight, as the history of Middle English shows. The prose work was the first to go; for the men who wrote at the courts of the Norman and Angevin kings would not use English, even when they could. Latin and Norman-French were the only languages they deigned to employ.

The poetry of the English school had a longer life, as is shown

by the works of the thirteenth century; but, being in its nature fundamentally different from the Romance poetry, it was bound to succumb in a manner more marked than the prose.

A different point arises in considering the question as to what was the real influence of the Norman-French on the English. So much has been said with regard to this, that we are almost led to think of the Conquest as having given us an entirely new language. Yet we cannot help seeing that the Old English held its own for some long time after the Conquest, although it was forced to accept a number of French words. But the nature of the language did not really change. It took these foreign words, and made use of them—some because they filled up gaps that English could not fill for itself; some because they conveyed shades of meaning that English was incapable of developing alone. The Conquest altered the inflections, though not to the same extent as the Danes had done, and it made large changes in spelling and pronunciation. In spite of all this, the English that we speak to-day is much nearer to the Old English of the times before the Conquest than it is to French.

The explanation of the matter seems to be this: that the Conquest touched the intellect of the English more than their language. It was the beginning in England of a new literature founded on Romance models. By means of this literature the manner of thought among the English people underwent a greater change than did their speech. It is at first difficult to realise this, because it means a change in the nation's perception —that is to say, in the nation's way of looking at things; and such a change is, from its nature, not nearly so easy to detect as a mere change in language.

III. NORMAN TIMES.

10. The New Literature written in Latin and French. Its Effect in England not to touch the Language, but to Influence English Thought.

In order to fully comprehend the influence of the Conquest, we must now trace the course of literature as it expressed itself in England between the years 1100 and 1400. The first of these three centuries may be looked upon as the time of the Conquest; the last two form what is generally known as the Middle English period.

Soon after the Conquest another new literature began to creep into England, based on Romance methods and practised by Romance writers who were about the court. The most prominent of these was William of Malmesbury, born in 1095. One of his parents was Norman and the other English. He was

brought up in a religious house at Malmesbury, and was always a student. When he came to manhood, the authorities at his monastery put him in charge of the library. He devoted himself to literature, and wrote in Latin a History of England, beginning with the arrival of Hengist and Horsa, and going on through the story of the Norman Conquest until the time of Henry the First. He afterwards wrote the history of his own days, calling this second book *Historia Novella*, or Modern History, which is of particular interest on account of its descriptions of the reign of Stephen. The well-known story of Queen Maud's escape over the frozen river comes to us from William's pages. It was characteristic of Malmesbury that, on hearing the news, he wrote it down at once, but added a cautious remark, "This I purpose describing more fully, if, by God's permission, I shall ever learn the truth of it from those who were present."

At the time that William was writing his *Chronicle*, a monk called Geoffrey lived at Monmouth Geoffrey was a Welshman, and had all the imagination and quick temper of his race. It appeared to him unfair that the chroniclers who wrote the country's history should always begin with the coming of the Saxons, or else with the Norman Conquest. It seemed to him only right that some attention should be paid to the days long before either Saxon or Norman, when the Celt ruled the whole of the land. Historical material, however, was very scanty. Geoffrey collected all he could of the Celtic tales and legends, and discovered the names of some of the Celtic kings. The Celts having always regarded themselves as one of the most ancient of races, Geoffrey, in default of anything better, asserted that they were descendants of Brut, the great-grandson of Æneas. Though the lineage that Geoffrey allotted to the Celts might be very exalted, there was always the fact that they had been absolutely defeated by the Teutons; and, as Geoffrey had no means of concealing this, he fell back on the legend of the two Celtic kings, Urien and Arthur, of the first of whom a good deal was known, but of the second almost nothing. Geoffrey took advantage of this to construct an imaginary history of Arthur, which is still famous as one of the best of romances. Geoffrey's *Chronicle* was written in Latin; a great drawback to its being read in England. Two versions of it were therefore written out in French; the first being made in the house of Ralph Fitz-Gilbert, a powerful baron in the North of England. His wife, the Lady Constance, could read no Latin; but was very anxious to get some knowledge of the much-talked-of *Chronicle*. One of the retainers in her house, Geoffrey Gaimar by name, undertook to make a version for her in French or

Anglo-Norman; and added to it the series of the Saxon kings. His work, though very popular, was superseded by a second translation, done by a reading clerk named Wace; with which Henry II. was so pleased that he made Wace a prebend at Bayeux. It appeared in 1155, six years after Geoffrey's work was completed. Later on the stories of Arthur were still more strengthened by the work of Walter Map, who attached to them the legends of the Holy Graal.

Map, who is sometimes called Mapes, from the Latinised form of his name, Mapus, had Celtic blood in his veins, like Geoffrey of Monmouth. He was born about 1143, on the borders of Wales, and always spoke of the Welsh as his countrymen and of England as "our mother." He went over to the University of Paris, a place of learning then in its early days. There were, however, enough English students to form one of the four schools into which the University eventually fell; and though there is no official authority extant of its recognition as a university until 1215, Map, writing of his student days, tells us that he himself witnessed town and gown riots.

On completing his work in Paris, Map returned to England about 1170, and went to court in attendance on the king. Henry the Second had been faithfully served for many years by members of the Map family. When Walter was some thirty years old, he presided at the Gloucester assizes as one of the itinerant judges. Soon after he was with the court at Limoges, acting as host, on behalf of the king, to a foreign archbishop. He accompanied Henry the Second, probably as chaplain, during the war with the Royal princes; and when he was English ambassador to Louis the Seventh, he was given the footing of a private guest by the French king. In 1179 he was sent to Rome to attend the Lateran Council on behalf of England, and on his return was made a canon of St. Paul's and precentor of Lincoln. In his fifty-third year he was made Archdeacon of Oxford, and after that time nothing certain is known of him.

Walter Map is an interesting personage, because he combined the knowledge of a well-born and refined man of the world with the learning of a scholar and the spiritual characteristics of a faithful priest. The thing that shocked him most was the corruption that, in the late years of the twelfth century, was prevalent among the clergy. Against it he fought with all his energy during the whole course of his life. At court he used his pen with considerable effect. Copies of Latin verses were passed from hand to hand, which were declared to be the work of a Bishop Golias, a dignitary too fond of the pleasures of the table. The verses were lively and amusing, and some people

actually believed that they did come from a shameless bishop. A more reasonable view was taken by those who coined a new word out of the Bishop's name. *Goliard*, which literally means a buffoon, came to signify a self-indulgent, untrustworthy individual, who led one kind of life while pretending to lead another. The poem, called the *Confession of Golias*, represented the bishop as in despair over his own condition. The hopelessness of his case compelled him to speak the truth. He admitted the evil of his mind, his attachment to sin, and, finally, his love for the tavern. "What I propose," he cried, "is to die in a tavern; let wine be put into my mouth as I am departing; so that the angel choirs, when they come, may cry 'God be propitious to this drunkard.'"

Another work, compiled by Map, was almost similar in nature to the *Confession*, though it was cast into a different form. This was a book called *On the Trifles of the Courtiers*—a collection of a large mass of anecdotes referring to King Henry's statesmen and officials. Map's view had been that it would be well to "set down in a book whatever he had seen or heard that seemed to him worth note, and that had not yet been written, so that the telling should be pleasant and the instruction should tend to morality." The last qualification was no doubt attained; but it may be doubted whether the "pleasantness of telling" was always arrived at. Map spoke clearly and distinctly against the undertaking of crusades, which caused the neglect of a man's duties at home. He declaimed freely against the vices of Rome, and made a direct attack upon Henry the Second.

The greater part of Map's literary work was far more satisfactory than his sharp verses or too candid anecdotes. The writings of Geoffrey of Monmouth and of Wace had done a great deal to extend throughout England the liking for the old Arthurian legends. But the tales, as they were told, were tales of passion, of courage, and of strength. To Walter Map it seemed that a spiritual side was wanting in them. This was a flaw that in his eyes could easily be remedied; he believed that a union should be made between them and the legend of the Holy Graal.

A series of prose romances was accordingly produced, the work of different hands, but the greater portion of them coming from the pen of Map. The first was the *Romance of the Holy Graal*, written at least twenty years later than Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Chronicle*. It was supposed to have been told by a hermit, who, in the year 717, saw, in England, a vision of Joseph of Arimathea, and of the Holy Graal. The Graal, according to one legend, was the dish which contained the Paschal Lamb at the Last Supper; according to another, it was the cup used by

Christ on the same occasion. The word comes from the Low Latin *gradalis*, or *gradale*, which signified a broad open dish, or else a chalice. After the supper the Graal passed into the hands of Joseph of Arimathea, who used it, at the taking down of our Lord's body from the Cross, to receive the blood from His wounds, by which its sacredness was doubled. Joseph, on leaving Jerusalem, went through France into Britain, taking the Graal with him; and it was carefully preserved in the treasury of one of the British kings.

The adaptation of this legend to the English versions of the Arthur romances, by means of which the Graal was added as a symbol of spiritual mysteries, may in all probability be attributed to Map. The second book, the *Romance of Merlin*, was put into French from the Latin by a writer named Robert de Baron. The third, *Lancelot of the Lake*, has always been attributed to Walter Map alone. It is a romance remarkable for its poetical feeling, and Lancelot is represented as an ideal knight, marred only by one single stain, that of his unlawful love for Queen Guinevere. The patient obedience and complete unselfishness of Lancelot's character is typified by his name, L'Ancelot, a diminutive form of Ancel, a word derived from the Latin *ancilla*, a servant.

The fourth romance, the *Quest of the Holy Graal*, is also the work of Map. He devised the idea of Sir Lancelot being the father of a son, who was to be called Sir Galahad. Lancelot himself had been depicted as the flower of a purely mundane chivalry; but Sir Galahad was to be a spiritual knight, whose dress of flame-colour typified the Holy Spirit that came down in tongues of fire.

The Graal had been bequeathed to Bishop Joseph, son of Joseph of Arimathea. He instituted the Order of the Round Table, where the initiated knights sat at their feasts as apostles. One seat, which Christ was said to have occupied, was always reserved for the pure Sir Galahad. If any impure person dared seat himself therein, the earth opened and swallowed him up. The name of the seat was, consequently, "The Seat Perilous."

Then wickedness spread throughout the nation, and the Holy Graal disappeared. The honour and happiness of England depended upon its recovery, but it was never found until Sir Galahad undertook the quest. He was the only human being to whom so great an honour could be granted.

The romances closed with the *Mort Artus*, the Death of Arthur, also written by Map, in which a strong spiritual meaning was attached to the words and actions of the king. Map very skilfully wove the idea he had conceived in and out of the old legends. He brought into them a strong advocacy for the

seeking of what is right, and of undertaking the duty for no personal advantage, but purely for the love of God. The wise lesson he taught was that of an unstained life being the only help on earth towards perceiving the real glory of God.

It is always to be remembered that books written in French, like the works of William of Malmesbury, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Walter Map, cannot be looked upon as actually belonging to English literature. Yet at the time that they appeared, there were a great number of people living in England to whom French was familiar. Upon such people, the influence exercised by these books was extraordinarily great. Although they were not read by the nation, and did not touch the language in any so effectual a way as the later Middle English literature, yet they were valuable because they widened the minds and cultivated the thoughts of those who could understand them.

IV. ENGLISH AFTER THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

11. The Dialects of Middle English.

The English dialects were at their fullest development between the Conquest and the end of the fourteenth century. About the year 1100 those people who had known West Saxon as the English literary language were probably all dead ; and when they were gone, West Saxon was regarded as being no better than Mercian or Northumbrian. In the opinion of the conquering race the dialects were merely the mark of a vulgar people, and they were consequently overshadowed by Norman-French, the language of both clergy and laity in the foreign upper classes.

English in its various forms was naturally the language of the bulk of the people ; and most of the clergy and the monks were still English, though the bishops and the abbots as a rule were not. Still there were some who could read English books, and some who could write them ; but after the fall of the dialect of Wessex, every man spoke or wrote in the dialect of the neighbourhood to which he belonged. Very soon the differences between these dialects became more and more marked, until for all practical purposes they fell into distinct divisions.

The Three Dialects.

1. *The Southern.*—The first of these was the Southern dialect, spoken chiefly south of the Thames, but extending over the river on to the north side. It went also as far westward as the counties of Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford. This dialect was the direct successor of Alfred's West Saxon, and, as a spoken language, is not extinct even now among the peasantry.

2. *The East Midland.*—North of the Southern dialect lay the East Midland, the boundaries of which were, roughly speaking, the Humber on the north, Lancashire and Cheshire on the north-west, and then by a line drawn south-east to Bedford continuing due east to Colchester. The dialect of this district is the progenitor of the standard English now used throughout the Empire. The reasons for the East Midland dialect obtaining the supreme position are many; but the following are the most important among them. London was essentially the capital of England. York and Winchester might be centres of cultivation, but the literary life of England would cluster in the capital. Both Oxford and Cambridge lay within the Midland area, and the Midland or London dialect was the language of the law courts, used by all political and professional men. The Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* had been begun by King Alfred in his own dialect; the last two chapters were written about 1154, at Peterborough, in the Midland district and in the Midland dialect. In Midland English Henry III. issued his Proclamation for summoning Parliament in 1258, the first occasion since the Conquest that English had been officially sanctioned in preference to French. In it, too, Wiclif wrote his versions of the Bible and Chaucer his poems; and it was the only one patronised by the printing press after 1477.

In addition to all these things there were certain features of the Midland dialect which gave it a supremacy over the others. It contained fewer Scandinavian or Danish words than the Northern, but more than the Southern. It was not blurred by Danish forms as the Northern dialect was; at the same time, the Northerners understood the Midlanders better than they could understand the Southrons. Its grammar too, though more difficult than the Northern, was easier than the Southern. It also received a larger number of French words than did the others; and no dialect could hope for supremacy unless it were well equipped with French, which had been the language of court and government for more than two hundred years.

3. *The West Midland.*—The third division of the West Midland speech lay to the north-west of the East Midland, and included the district of South Lancashire, with Shropshire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, and part of Derbyshire. The chief difference between it and the East Midland was that it had not been affected by Danish influences so much as its fellow.

4. *The Northumbrian.*—The fourth division, reaching from the Humber to beyond Edinburgh, was the home of the Northumbrian dialect, the descendant of the old Northern speech of Cædmon and of Bede. This eventually spread over the south-west lowlands, and along the east coast to the north of Scotland.

Two easy tests for distinguishing the dialects are given by the present plural indicative of verbs, as well as by the form of the present participle. In the Northern dialect the present plural indicative ended in *-es* (*sing-es*, we, you, or they sing); in Midland, *-en* or *-e* (*sing-en* or *sing-e*, we, you, or they sing); in Southern, *-eth* (*sing-eth*, we, you, or they sing).

The present participle in the North ended in *-and*; in the Midland in *-ende*; in the Southern in *-inge*. The last was changed into *-ing*, and completely superseded the other two.

V. THE STRUGGLE WITH THE NORMAN-FRENCH.

12. Books of Virtually Pure English.

However much the English dialects may have been in rivalry with one another, they made for a time a common front against their foe. The thirteenth century saw the production of several purely English books, written in the Northern, the Midland, or the Southern, most of them in verse, and all showing a strong desire to use the national tongue as bravely as possible. One of these books was Layamon's *Brut* in the Southern dialect, and appearing in 1205. It is a long fabulous poem, reciting the early history of Britain, freely translated from a French original by Wace. Layamon, a priest, who lived at Erneley, now called Arcley, in Worcestershire, towards the close of the twelfth century, undertook the work. It contains 32,000 lines, part of which are alliterative, after the Old English method, and part are rhymed after the manner of the original. The construction in both kinds is very loose, and the lines are mixed together indiscriminately. The old inflections, however, are preserved much more carefully by Layamon than by others who followed him. His grammar is neither regular nor correct; his language is obviously Anglo-Saxon, but he has treated it with the utmost negligence.

The following passage from the *Brut* illustrates Layamon's power of writing a full and effective description. It tells the story of the meeting of King Vortigern with the Princess Rowena, daughter of Hengist, and of the introduction of the Teutonic system of toasts amongst the British:

"Hengest went to the abode
and caused her to be clad
All the garments that she wore
they were the best could be had,
She bore in her hand
filled with wine,
Men, high born,
before the king,
Rowena kneeled upon her knee,
where Rowena dwelt,
in splendour measureless.
were wondrously adorned;
encrusted with gold.
a golden bowl
than which was none better.
led her to the hall
the fairest of all things.
and cried to the king,

'Lord King, Wæs hæil!
The king this heard
So the King Vortigern
what was that speech
Then answered Keredic,
best of interpreters
'List now, Lord King,
what saith Rowena,
It is the custom
that a friend says to his friend,
Dear friend, *Wæs hæil!*
The same that holds the cup,
another, full, is fetched;
When that cup has come,
This is good law
and in Almaine
When Vortigern heard this,
and said, in British,
'Maiden Rowena,
The maid drank up her wine,
and gave it to the king,
and he drank it up;
the law of Wæs-hail came into
this land,
thy coming makes me glad.'
but knew not what she said.
asked his knights quickly
the maiden had spoken.
a knight most illustrious,
that ever came there.
and I will tell thee
the fairest of women.
in the land of the Saxons
with kind look, and courteous,
the other says, Drink hail.
he drinks it up;
he entrusts it to his friend.
then kiss they thrice.
in Saxon land;
is held as noble.'
the cups he saw
(he could not in English),
drink ye blithely then.'
and brought the other in,
and thrice she kissed him;
and through this very game,
that many love so well."

Wæs hail, Be hale. *Waes* is the imperative of the verb *wesan*, to be. The amalgamation of the two words made *Wassail.*
Almaine, Germany.

The next book of any value is the *Ormulum*, so called by its author after his own name, Ormin or Orm, an Augustinian monk, who lived in Lincolnshire. The *Ormulum* appeared between 1200 and 1215, but was written in a dialect quite different from Layamon's, although the space of time between them was so short. It was not Anglo-Saxon pure and simple, but Anglo-Saxon altered by contact with another tongue. That tongue was Danish, which had not only broken down and simplified the inflections in the East Midland dialect, but had encroached upon the dialect by forcing Danish words into it. The remains of this poem amount to some 20,000 short lines, divided into thirty-two parts. They are founded on Gospel selections from the daily Church service, the narrative being first given in a loose paraphrase, with comments following it. The verses are arranged in couplets, of eight and seven syllables respectively. Their accent is regular, though they have neither alliteration nor rhyme. A peculiarity of spelling marks the book—the doubling of the consonant to indicate a short vowel. Thus the words *this*, *than*, *after*, and *under* are spelt *thiss*, *thann*, *afterr* and *unnderr*.

The following passage will afford an example of Orm's quaint explanations of the Jewish sacrifices:

"The book of the Jewish people told them that they ought to bring two bucks at the same time to the priest at the church door; and they did so blithely as their book taught them, and brought the two bucks therewith to sacrifice to the Lord. At the church door the priest took the two bucks, and on one of them he laid there all their guilt and sin, and let it wander forth out into the wild waste; and he took and killed that other buck to make a sacrifice to the Lord. All this was done for their need, and also for our need. For it helped them before God to cleanse them of their sin; and so may it also help thee, if thou wilt also follow it, if thou wilt full inwardly with true faith believe all that was betokened there, which is what you should do. Then may this truth aid you to win the mercy of God. The two bucks signify to us one God of two kinds. It is the Lord Jesus Christ that is of two kinds; for Jesus Christ is verily, I believe, true God in divine nature, and He is also, in full truth, true man in man's nature. For Christ is both God and man, one person of two kinds; and this it is necessary for every man to believe who yearns for God's mercy. One buck ran away alive with all the folks' sins; and Christ's divine nature was all alive and undistressed, when Christ was upon the cross, nailed there for our need. And Christ's divine nature, all living and all without pain, bore our sins away, while Christ's human nature drank death's drink on the cross for our wicked deeds. And just as the other buck endured there the pains of death to honour the Lord by sacrifice for all folks' sin, so the human nature of Christ suffered death's pain on the cross, because He would offer Himself there to the Lord as a sacrifice to cleanse us, through His death, from the uncleanness of our sins.

"And so came Christ's divine nature quite alive up into Heaven, which, before the death of Christ, was as if it were waste land, since both angels and men had renounced it before. For the angels had deservedly lost the kingdom, because they would try to make themselves equal to God through pride, for which they fell quickly down from Heaven into Hell, into eternal woe, because that they had renounced eternal bliss. And all those that fell so, they are hateful devils, and continue in heat and envy to destroy men's souls. And thou mightest defend thyself from them through true love of Christ, and through the work that pertains thereto with Jesus Christ's help. And our two first men that the Lord created out of the earth lost also for their guilt, by righteous judgment, the bliss of heaven, since that they through the devil's counsel renounced the counsel of God; and because of this was the abode of Heaven like a wild waste, since both men and angels had forsaken it."

Another important work belonging to about the year 1220, is the *Ancren Riwle*, or Rule of Nuns, a book of instruction in conduct and behaviour for the younger sisters to obey. Some of these directions are curious in their frankness, as the accompanying specimens will show. The original text is a very valuable one, being a perfect specimen of the Southern dialect.

Directions as to Speech.

"First of all, when you have to go to your parlour window, enquire from your maiden who it is that has come, for it might be such a person as you ought to shun; but when you really must go forth, cross very carefully your mouth, ears, and eyes, and your breast also, and go forth with

God's dread to the priest. And first say *Confiteor*, and afterwards *Benedicite*. Listen carefully to what he has to say, and sit quite still, so that, when he goes from you, he knows neither good nor evil of you; then he can give you neither blame nor praise. Many are so well-informed, or so wisely worded, that they would like him to know it. They sit and speak to him, and requite him word for word, and take the place of master when they should be nuns, and they teach him that has come to teach them; they will by their talk soon be known and recognised as among the wise. Well recognised she is, for by the very thing that she expects to be thought much of he perceives that she is a fool. For she haunts after praise, and only catches blame. For at the last, when he is going away, 'This nun,' says he, 'is of much speech.'

"Eve held in paradise a long talk with the serpent, and told him all that lesson that God had taught her and Adam concerning the apple; and so the fiend, by her words, understood immediately her weakness, and found a way to bring about her perdition. Our Lady, Saint Mary, did all the other way. She told the angel no stories, but asked him briefly about things she did not know. Ye, my dear sisters, follow our Lady, and not the cackling Eve. Therefore, let a nun, whoever she may be, as much as ever she can and may, hold her still; let her not have anything of the hen's nature. The hen, when she has laid, can do nothing but cackle—and what gets she thereby? The raven comes immediately and deprives her of her eggs, and devours that from which she should bring forth her young birds; and exactly so the wicked chough, the devil, bears away from the cackling nun and swallows, all the good that she hath begotten, which, as birds, bear her upwards to heaven, if she had not cackled. The wretched pedlar makes more noise in crying his soap than the merchant all his precious ware. To some ghostly man that you may be trusting in—as ye may be of few—it is good if ye will ask advice, and pray him that he will teach you against temptations, and show in confession your greatest and your least sin, if he will pity you; and through his compassion will cry to Christ inwardly for mercy for you, and have you in his mind and in his prayers. 'But guard you, and be wary,' saith our Lord, 'for many come to you shrouded in lamb's fleece, but inwardly are ravening wolves.' Worldly men believe little; religious even less. Desire not too much their acquaintance. Eve, without dread, talked to the serpent. Our Lady was terrified of Gabriel's speech."

Between the years 1246 and 1250 a cheerful English poem by Nicholas of Guildford appeared, which is known by the name of *The Owl and the Nightingale*. It is the story of a quarrel between these two birds, each of whom brings before the other her own particular claims to admiration at the same time that she is careful to point out her rival's demerits. After a long dispute it seems that the birds called upon Nicholas of Guildford to act as judge between them.

Nicholas, in the course of the poem, tells us a little about himself. He appears to have been at first a gay young man of the world, but he had eventually entered the church, only to find that his talents were ignored; and in consequence he had to live as best he could in the dull village of Portesham in Dorsetshire.

The poem is written in the rhyming eight-syllable measure of the French romance; yet it is so very English, that in all its seventeen hundred lines there are only about twenty words of Norman origin. The dialect is that of the south of England, but it is wanting in any of the marked provincialisms which characterise some particular county.

"I was in a certain dale,
In a very secret spot,
I heard, holding a great tale,
An owl and a nightingale.
Their plea was stiff, and stark, and strong,
Sometimes soft, every now and then loud,
And each against the other swelled,
And let all its bad anger out.
And each said of the other's habits
The worst of all they knew;
And in between each other's song
They kept their quarrel very strong."

The dispute raged vigorously, and the nightingale made several long harangues, at the end of one of which

"She sang so loud and sharp,
As if one twanged a shrill harp
The owl gave ear thitherward,
And held her eyes downward,
And sat swollen and puffed-up,
As if she had swallowed a frog;
For she well knew and was aware
That the nightingale sang in scorn.
Nevertheless gave she answer,
'Why don't you fly into the open,
And show which of us two
Is of brighter hue, of fairer blue?'
'No, for thou hast sharp claws;
I do not care that thou should'st claw me,
Thou hast very strong claws;
Thou pinchest like a pair of tongs;
Thou thinkest, as do those like thee,
With fair words to beguile me.
I would not do what thou advisest me;
I know well that thou misadvisest me.
Shame on thee for thy bad advice;
Revealed is thy treachery!
Shield thy treachery from the light.
And hide the wrong among the right,
When thou wilt thy wickedness use,
Look that it be not seen.'"

The owl was rather taken aback by this vigorous harangue, and in a meek manner agreed to the nightingale's further proposal to refer to an arbitrator.

"Then quoth the owl, 'Who shall reconcile us?
Who can and will judge us rightly?'

'I know well,' said the nightingale,
'There need be no question about that.
Master Nicholas of Guildford,
He is wise and wary of words;
He is skilful in giving decision,
And every vice is hateful to him.
He knows well in every song
Who sings right and who sings wrong,
And he can distinguish from the right
The wrong, the darkness from the light.'"

Eventually there is some difficulty in finding Master Nicholas. The nightingale consults the wren:

"'Promised I have, and true it is,
That Master Nicholas, who is wise,
Between us shall judge;
Yet I suppose he will;
Where now shall we him find?'
The wren sat in a linden-tree.
'What! Know ye not,' quoth she, 'his home?
He dwelleth at Portisham,
At a town in Dorset,
By the sea in our outlet.
There he judges many right judgments,
And ordains and rules much wisdom.
To seek him is an easy thing,
He has only but one dwelling;
That is to the bishop's shame;
And all that of his name
Have heard, and of his deeds,
Why will they not take counsel,
That he might be with them much,
To teach them of his wisdom;
And pay him tithe in many places,
That he might always be with them?'"

The owl cordially agrees, and so does the nightingale; and it can only be hoped, though the evidence is rather to the contrary, that the bishop was not obdurate. As to the quarrel of the owl and the nightingale, no certain knowledge of its result has ever been obtained.

13. English Books with a Tinge of French.

At the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth some metrical romances were written, in which, though the Anglo-Saxon inflections were largely disregarded, the French influence was tolerably small. One of the best of these is *Havelok the Dane*, a bright, interesting story, though with a tragic beginning.

In the time of Athelwold there lived a rich king of Denmark named Birkabeyn. He was a widower, but dwelt in comfort with his young son, Havelok, and his two little daughters, Swanborow and Helfled. Birkabeyn was suddenly taken with his last illness; and, feeling that death was fast approaching,

bethought himself of how he could arrange that his children should not be neglected. He therefore sent for his best friend, Godard, begging his speedy attendance and his help.

Godard came at once, and listened to the king's sad story, promising in return to do all he could for the prince and princesses, and to regard them as his own. Birkabeyn was quite contented, and died happy, believing that his children would be safe. Hardly was he laid in his grave than Godard seized the three children, and threw them into his castle, where he imprisoned and chained them, and gave them hardly any food, and no fire or warmth at all. When, after some time, he found they would not die, he determined on other courses. He brutally cut the throats of the two girls, but was afraid to kill the boy. He then sent for one of his thralls, a man named Grim. To this man he promised freedom and much gold, if he would take Havelok next night and drown him in the sea. Grim, because he could think of nothing else, agreed to commit the crime; and, thrusting Havelok into a great black sack, bore him off to his cottage, to hand over to his wife. She was terribly frightened at her husband's doings, but dare not disobey him; and in her haste flung the boy into a dark closet until her husband could take him away.

Suddenly she saw an intensely bright light shining from the closet, and, going back, found a ray of light like a sunbeam streaming from her prisoner's mouth. She shrieked for her husband, who came running in, and between them they loosed the boy from the cords in which Godard had bound him, and on his shoulder found a royal mark.

Grim knew at once that the lad must be the prince; and being less afraid to incur the wrath and vengeance of Godard than to commit the crime of slaying a royal child, he determined at once to leave Denmark with all his family, and to take the prince with him. This daring scheme he carried out successfully. Havelok was given a good meal, which he wanted sadly, and was hidden until Grim was ready to start. Grim got his boat ready, loaded it as quickly as he could with provisions; sold all his property, "all his corn, his sheep with wool, his neat with horn, his horse and swine, and goat with beard, the geese, the hens out of the yard." Then, the next night, he put into the boat his wife, his three sons, his two daughters, who were pretty girls, and Havelok. Then, taking his oars, he got in himself, and rowed bravely into the high seas, until he had left the shore for more than a mile. Then a wind arose from the north, and drove the boat down quickly towards England.

"In Humber, Grim began to land
In Lindesaye, right at the north end,

There his ship stuck on the sand,
But Grim it drove up to the land.
And there he made a little cot
For himself and his company;
He began, in order there to dwell,
A little house of earth to make,
So that they well there
In their lodging harboured were;
And because Grim owned the place,
The stead of Grim became its name.
So that Grimsby call it all,
Who speak of it at all;
And so men will call it aye
Between this and Domesday."

The rest of the poem, a long one in the East Midland dialect, relates the further adventures of Havelok. He first of all became cook's boy in the kitchen of a certain Earl Godrich in Lincoln, who held in captivity an English princess, Goldborough. The earl had promised to marry this princess to the best man in England; and thought he could, with convenience to himself, give her Havelok for a husband. The earl did not at all realise what a brave and capable lad his cook's boy had become. In course of time both Earl Godrich and Godard were put to the rout, and Havelok and his bride reigned for sixty years in England. The old legend has not been swept away, even down to the present times. There is still a boundary stone in Grimsby called the Havelok stone, and an old street known as Havelok Street.

King Horn is in the West Midland dialect, and is probably a translation of the French romance of *Horn and Rymenhild*, written in the thirteenth century. It and *Havelok* both certainly date from before 1300.

"Happy will he always be,
A song I shall you sing
He was king westwards,
Godhild was his queen called;
He had a son named Horn;
Nor rain rain upon,
No one was fairer than he;
White was his skin as a flower;
In no other kingdom
Twelve companions he had,
All rich men's sons,
These with him were to play;
One called Athulf Child,
Athulf was the best,
Who to my song lists.
Of Murray the King.
So far as his lands extended.
Fairer than she none could be.
Fairer could not have been born,
Nor sun shine upon.
He was bright as glass,
Rose-red his colour was.
Was any like him.
Who all with him he led;
And all of them fair men.
And most he lovèd two,
And the other Fykenhild.
And Fykenhild the worst."

Murray the King was riding one day along the sea-shore with two knights and Horn by his side, when fifteen Saracen ships suddenly appeared; and, before the king could gallop away, he and the knights and Horn were surrounded. The king

and the knights were slain, and Horn was taken prisoner by the Paynims; who also insisted on seizing Horn's troop of companions. Then the young people were put on board one of their ships, the whole fleet at once setting sail for the Saracen's land. Before their voyage had lasted very long, the Paynim admiral, who was "bold of words," entered into a serious conversation with Horn, and explained that his comrades and his crew had hardly realised how strong young Horn and his companions were. The admiral went on to say that in a very short time Horn would have grown so much as to be a dangerous foe. "Then," said the admiral, "if thou wert alive with sword and with knife, we should all die, and thy father's death atone for."

Without more ado, Horn and his friends were thrown into a boat to find their way wherever they could. The other youths were terrified, and could give hardly any help at all. Horn rowed like a man all the rest of the day and all through the night; until in the morning he came in sight of land, and soon after saw men walking on the shore.

They found themselves in Westernesse, where they were kindly received; and before long, Horn became page to King Aylmer, the ruler of the country; and very quickly fell in love with Princess Rymenhild, the king's daughter.

Soon after, he was made a knight, and achieved so many bold and daring things, that men looked upon him with the greatest honour and respect. The king, however, insisted on his banishment on account of Rymenhild, and he was forced to ask her to wait for him for seven long years. Soon after this, Fykenhild, his former friend, but now a treacherous enemy, took the opportunity of Horn's absence to elope with Rymenhild. She was compelled to go as a captive to Fykenhild's castle, and could only wait until Horn came to her rescue. Horn had gone into his own country to get it back from an enemy who had seized it; but, on hearing of Rymenhild's misery and danger, he disguised himself as a harper, went to Fykenhild's castle, killed Fykenhild, and recovered his dear sweetheart.

"Horn came to the South Danes,
Rymenhild he made his Queen,
All folk might them rue,
Now be they both dead;
Here endeth the Tale of Horn,
Jesus, that is of Heaven King,
All among his kin;
As well might be.
Who loved them so true.
Christ to Heaven them lead.
Who was fair, and not plain.
Give us all His sweet blessing."

14. Books with a large admixture of French.

We come now to some books in which French words are numerous.

Quite at the end of the century, about 1298, Robert of Gloucester produced his rhymed *Chronicle of England*, which began with the siege of Troy and ended with the death of Henry the Third. It is written in the Southern dialect as spoken in Gloucestershire, and, though full of French words and idioms, is not difficult to understand. One of the most interesting passages tells us of the spread of French throughout the land and of the reason which made so many people take it up. "Unless a man knows French," he says, "the world thinks very little of him, but the common men hold to English and to their own speech still. I believe there is not in all the world any country that does not cling to her own speech, except England. And yet I admit that to know both is good; for the more that a man knows, the more worthy he is considered."

A writer of a different stamp was Robert Manning, commonly called Robert of Brunne, from his birth-place, Brunne or Bourne, in Lincolnshire. He seems to have lived between the years 1260 and 1340, and in his middle age, about 1303, translated a French book which he called the *Handlyng Synne* (the Controlling, Irresistible, or Deadly Sin). His version was made in the East Midland dialect, but with a very large proportion of French words. His language is in fact nearer to Modern English than even that of Chaucer, who wrote nearly half-a-century later. It contains a very scanty proportion of the Teutonic words that were soon going to drop out of the English speech, and so stands in marked contrast to the *Cursor Mundi* of a few years later. It is a book which gives us our first glimpse of many words and phrases afterwards made familiar by the English Bible and Prayer-Book.

One of the best tales in it is that of *Pierce the Usurer*.

"Saint John, the almoner,
And was very covetous—
And gathered money into store,
It happened that on a certain day
And spread their clothes across their bosoms
And reckoned up the houses each one,
Where they got good, they praised the folk well;
And as they talked of many what,
And each one said, who sat or stood,
Then one of them began to say,
That I shall have some good from him,
To that wager they granted all

Says Pierce was a usurer,
A niggard—and avaricious,
As usurers do everywhere.
Some poor men sat by the way,
To protect them from the hot sun;
At which they got good, at which they got none,
Where they got nought, they said nothing at all.
Pierce came out into the road
'Here is Pierce, that never did good.'
'A wager with you dare I lay
Be he never so gruff and grim.'
To give a gift, should it so befall;

Of many what, all kinds of things.

This man jumped up, and hurried straight
As he stood still, a man drove by
That same bread Pierce had bought,
He saw Pierce come therewithal;

I ask thine aid in charity,
Pierce stood, and looked on him
Then he stooped to seek a stone;
So, for a stone, he seized a loaf,
He picked it up with great delight,
And to his comrades, 'See,' cried he,

'Nay,' swore they by their thrift,

Until he came to Pierce's gate,

An ass with bread packed heavily;
And to his house it now was brought.
And the poor man thought, 'Now ask I shall.
Pierce, if it thy will may be.'
Fiercely with eyes grim.
But, as it happened, he found none.
And hurled it at the poor oaf.
And ran away with all his might,
'So God me save—what Pierce gave me!

'Pierce gave you never such a gift.'"

Three days after this, Pierce was taken with a great sickness; and, as he lay in his bed, he thought that he was sent for to come to his judgment. When he appeared before the judges, he was terrified, for a fiend stood by his side, accusing him cruelly; and everything was shown—of how he had lived since he had been born; and all his bad deeds were weighed in the scales, and they went terribly down on one side. Then the judges said, "What are we to do? The only good deed we know about at all is the loaf he gave to the poor man. And that he did not give for God's love, but merely out of ill-will to the beggar. Still," they said, "the poor man did get the loaf, Let us weigh it, and see what we may do."

The scale was piled up with Pierce's sins on the one side, and the little loaf was quite by itself on the other; but when the scales were raised in the air, the loaf weighed as much as the sins did; and the scales were even. Then the judges said to Pierce, "If thou art wise, now wilt thou have learnt how this loaf hath helped thee at need to prepare thy soul with alms-giving."

Then Pierce woke from his sleep, and meditated about his dream. He thought how he would have been lost, had it not been for the mercy of Jesus Christ. So from that time he became a man of a different life, both meek and kind to the poor, and no one was more generous with alms than he. One day a poor man, who had lost all his possessions in the sea, and was tramping about nearly as naked as when he was born, stopped at Pierce's gate, and begged for some clothes. Pierce instantly took his kirtle off, and, throwing it on the man's shoulders, bade him wear it for his sake. The man took it gratefully, and seemed most thankful; but Pierce happened to watch him as he went down the street, and was grieved and amazed to see that he instantly turned into a low shop, and sold it.

Pierce was so upset with this ingratitude that he wept bitterly, and retreated to his house in a miserable frame of

mind. The tears exhausted him; and, as men do after weeping, he lay down and went to sleep, when he dreamed at once a marvellous dream. He thought he was taken up to Heaven, and there, in the bright shining light, saw God Himself sitting on His throne, clothed in the kirtle that Pierce had given to the poor man.

" God spake to him full mildly,
Lo, Pierce, this is thy cloth;
Know well, if that thou can,
Whate'er thou giv'st in charity,
Pierce from sleep awoke,
'Blessed be all poor men,
Well it is that the poor are here;
And I shall try, by night and day,
'Why weepest, and art sorry?
He sold it; thou wert wrath.
For Me thou'st helped the man;
Every part thou giv'st to Me.'
And wondered greatly and spoke,
For God Almighty loveth them.
To God they are beloved and dear;
To be poor, if that I may.'"

He sold his chattels hastily; and distributed the money among the starving people.

The *Cursor Mundi*, or Course of the World, belonging to the second quarter of the fourteenth century, was a metrical version of Bible history, with various mediæval legends interspersed. It seems to have been a most popular book in its day, but it never was printed until quite recent years. It is in the Northern dialect, and is of special value to the history of the language, for it shows more clearly than almost any other book how extraordinary was the mixture of speech prevalent in England at this time. It contains not only many current Teutonic words, but a quantity from the same source that were even then quite obsolete. Its proportion of French words is also vast. If it were to be judged by the obsolete words, its date would have to be put back to 1260. If only the ordinary Teutonic words were regarded, the date might be 1290. If the French words are reckoned as well, it must be looked upon as a product of 1340. The likeliest explanation is that the original work was done in Northumberland about the middle of the thirteenth century; and in later copies of the manuscript, as the incursion of French words had grown steadily larger, many of the old words were removed, and new ones of French origin were put in their places.

The following passage gives a vivid account of the visit of the Three Kings to the Infant Christ at Bethlehem:

" The star went onwards, that them led,
And wondrously then were they fed;
Their wallets, when they walked or rode,
Them never failed of drink or food.
These kings went forth upon their road,
The star before them always glowed.
They said, 'Now go we to the King,
That shall on earth have no ending.' . . .

They followed of this star the gleam,
Till they came to Jerusalem;
But when their journey's end they neared,
The star, it hid, and disappeared. . . .
Natheless, of this the kings knew nought,
But thought they had found what they sought.
They took their lodging in the town,
Enquiring for Him up and down;
But the burgesses of that city
Wondered what this thing might be;
They asked them what they sought, and they
Said, 'A blissful child, *par fai*,
We saw a star that led us hither.'
Then they all gathered them together,
And spake here-of with great wond'ring,
Until word came to Herod King,
That there was such a King come down,
And taken lodging in the town.
When he these tidings understood,
He thought them neither fair nor good; . . .
At once he did together call,
The wise men of his kingdom all.
And asked of them if any wist
Where should be born that infant Christ,
That should the King of the Jews be.
They said, 'In Bethlem of Judè.'
"Herod then asked the kings in dread
When last they saw the star, and said,
'Go now, and search with earnest mind,
And when, at last, the child you find,
Come back, and tell me where he be;
For I, with worship, will him see.'
'Sir,' said the kings, 'That shall be so.'
But when they went their way to go,
And left the King, that traitor base,
The star they saw before their face,
Ready to start; which seems to me
That no man saw it save those three.
"Betwixt the earth and air it swayed;
So fair a star was never made;
And right from great Jerusalem
It led them into Bethlehem.
Over the house then stands the star,
Where Jesus and His mother are.
Then kneel they down; their gifts they bring.
Each brought him worthy offering.
The first of them, that Jasper hight,
He gave Him gold with reason right
And that was for to shew tokening,
Of all kings, that He was the King.
Came Melchoir next, and not the least,

Natheless, nevertheless, however.
Par fai, by my faith.
Here-of, of these things.
Wist, knew.
Hight, named.

Divine was he, both God and priest.
Before Him then with incense fell;
Which should in church be burnt, to smell
It is a gum which comes from fir.
But Attropa gave gift of myrrh,
An ointment of strange bitterness. . . .
In token He was mortal, and would die.
'Of these three gifts,' as says the Book,
'At once all three He gladly took;
Full sweetly, with a smiling cheer,
Beheld these gifts, so rich and dear.'

"Joseph and Mary mild, his spouse,
Full fair they called them to the house,
Fair did their supper they prepare.
When with the Child at night they were,
Splendour was not; for, sooth to tell,
The only bed was spread with pell.
But what they found, with great content
They took, and thanked God it was sent,
Full glad were they, they had so sped.
Then the three kings are brought to bed,
Three weary kings upon their way;
The fourth, a Child, much more than they. . . .

"They had in mind that very night
To go to Herod, as they hiht;
But while they, sleeping, lay in bed,
An angel came, and them forbid
To travel near him any way,
For he was traitrous, false in fai;
Another way they needs must fare.

"At morning, when they risen were,
And they had honoured there the Child,
They took their leave of Mary mild,
And Joseph they thanked courteously
For food and for herbergeri.

"The kings then went another way."

Cheer, manner, behaviour.
Pell, a skin or hide of leather.
Hiht, had promised.
Fare, journey, travel.
Herbergeri, lodging.

From the county of Kent, in 1340, comes another very good specimen of dialectic writing, in the book known as the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, a title more intelligible in its Latinised form, the *Remorse of Conscience*. It was a translation made from the French by Dan Michel, of Northgate, in the county of Kent, "a brother of the cloister of St. Austin of Canterbury," and is particularly valuable as an example of the Kentish dialect. A brief translation will give some idea of Dan Michel's quaintness of style:

"These are the twelve articles of the Christian belief, that each man shall believe steadfastly, for otherwise he cannot be saved, though he hath

wit and skill. And of them there are twelve, according to the numbering of the twelve apostles that composed these for all those who wish to be saved, to hold and to look to. The first article is this: 'I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of Heaven and Earth.' This article Saint Peter composed. The second article belongeth to the Son, as to his Godhead; that is to say, that He is God; and this it is: 'I believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord, the Son of God the Father, in all things that belong to the Godhead; and He is one and the same thing with the Father, save as regards the person, which is other than the person of the Father.' This article St. John the Gospeller composed."

The short poems of Laurence Minot, written in the Northern dialect about 1350, and singing the praises of Edward the Third and his victories, teemed with French in much the same manner as the books immediately preceding them.

These are some of the stanzas from the ballads on the expedition to Brabant:

"God, that made both sea and sand,
Save Edward, King of England,
Both body, soul, and life,
And grant him joy without strife.
For many men with him are wroth,
In France and in Flanders both;
For he defends fast his right,
And thereto, Jesu, grant him might,
And so to do both night and day
That it may be to God's pay.

"Our king had come, truly to tell,
Into Brabant for to dwell;
The Kaiser Louis of Bavere
That in that land had then no peer,
He and his sons and princes more,
Bishops and prelates with wealth in store,
Princes and people, old and young,
All that spake the Dutch tongue,
Came together with great honour
Sir Edward to save and to succour;
And proferred him with all their rede,
For to hold the king his stede.

"The Duke of Brabant, first of all,
Swore, for aught that might befall,
That he should, both day and night,
Help Sir Edward in his right,
In town, in field, in frith, and fen;
This swore the duke and all his men,
And all the lords that with him came;

Pay, satisfaction.

Louis of Bavere. Louis, Duke of Bavaria, who, later on, became sole Emperor of Germany.

Rede, advice.

To hold the king his stede, to hold the king's place.

And thereto held they up their hand:
Then King Edward took his stand,
At Antwerp, which he liked best,
And there he made his money plain,
That no man should say there-again.
His money, that was good and real,
Left he in Brabant a great deal;
And all that land, until this day,
Fares better for that journey."

Made his money plain, coined his money.
There-again, against it.

We turn now to the consideration of William Langland's popular poem of the *Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman*, written about 1352. Langland used an alliterative verse, in long lines of twelve syllables, very regular in its construction; and several other poems planned on this method followed his. The metre, however, was not taken up either by Chaucer or by Gower, Chaucer's friend, nor has any other English poet used it since the fourteenth century. Langland's work was thoroughly Teutonic in its verse and thought; it was only tinged by Romance in the words that he employed. The first ten lines of his Prologue show the same Teutonic feeling that was employed still more a little later on by Chaucer:

"In a summer season, when soft was the sun,
I slipped me into a smock, as if I were a shepherd;
In the habit of a hermit unholy in works
I wandered widely in this world, wonders to hear.
But on a May morning on Malvern hills,
A wonder befell me—a fairy dream I thought it;
I was weary of wandering, and went me to rest
Under a broad bank, by a brook side,
And as I lay and leaned, and looked on the water,
I slumbered in a sleep, it sounded so soothing."

Then beneath his feet he thought he saw a fair field full of folk, by which is signified the world, with its multitudes of inhabitants. The poet mingled with the crowd, and made the acquaintance of a gorgeously-clad maiden, named Meed (which means Reward or Bribery). She was about to be married to Falsehood, when Theology interfered, and forbade the marriage.

The poet saw the field another time, when Reason was preaching to the crowd. He told them that the pestilence and the south-west wind came as warnings to their pride. Then Repentance prayed, and Hope blew a horn, and a thousand men cried to Christ, to tell them the way to Truth. Then they dispersed in confusion,

"Till it was late and long that a man they met,
Apparelled as a palmer, in pilgrim's weeds.

He bore a pilgrim's staff, with a broad list,
'In a withy-band's wise, wreathed about him.
A bag and a bowl he bare by his side,
A hundred of ampolles on his hat fastened,
Signs of Sinai, and shells of Galicia,
Many crosses on his cloak, and keys of Rome.
And the Vernicle before, so that men should know
And see by his signs whom he had sought.

"The folk asked him fair from whence had he come;
'From Sinai,' he said, 'and from the Sepulchre;
From Bethlehem and Babylon, I have been in both.
In India and in Syria and in many other places.
Ye may see by my signs, that sit in my hat,
That I have walked full wide, in wet and dry,
And sought good saints for my soul's health.'

"'Know'st thou a holy person called Saint Truth
'Canst thou show us the way where that he dwelleth?'
'Nay, so God help me,' said the man then,
'Never saw I palmer with picked staff or scrip,—
Such a saint seek now even in this place.'

"'Peter!' quoth a ploughman, and put forth his head,
'I know him as well as a clerk knows his books.
Clean Conscience and Wit showed me to his place,
And did persuade me to serve him for ever.
Both to sow and to reap so long I could labour,
I have been his fellow these fifteen winters;
I both sowed his seed, and followed his beasts,
And also kept his corn, and carried it to the house.
I dyked and delved, and did what he ordered
Within and without. I watched his profit;
There is no labourer in his farm whom he loves more.
For though I say it myself, I serve him to satisfy.
I have my hire of him well, and sometimes more;
He is the quickest payer that poor men have.
He withholds not a servant's pay, so that he has it not at evening.
He is as poor as a lamb, lowly of speech,
And if ye will, I can tell you where he dwelleth;
I will show you the way home to his place.'"

In a withy-band's wise, like a withy-band.
Ampolles, very small bottles for holy water.
Vernicles, copies of a picture of Christ, miraculously printed on a handkerchief for Saint Veronica.
"Peter." Used as an exclamation, "By Saint Peter!"

This promise of Piers sounds very satisfactory; but the ardour of the crowd is considerably damped when he explains that, before they can find Truth, they must go through Meekness until they meet Conscience. When they find that the road to Truth is hampered by so many drawbacks, they begin to fall off, and eventually numbers of them go entirely away.

Piers then tries to persuade them to come and work honestly at ploughing and sowing on a half-acre of land that he has by

the roadside. A few of them try, but many shirk even their small amount of daily work, until Hunger comes down, and punishes them severely. A few of those who have honestly continued at their work are sent a pardon from Truth, which, in its conditions, is totally unlike those that they have been accustomed to receive from the Pope. The principal clause of Truth's pardon was "They who have done well shall pass into Life Eternal"; and the poet, in his dream, realised that we must search for Do-Well, and presently he learnt what Do-Well means.

A man just like himself, except that his name was Thought, then told him that Do-Well was the natural goodness of a man; that it followed one who was truthful and worked honestly, who never took what was not his own, and who was always sober.

Do-Better had not only these qualities, but higher graces still. He was meek and helpful, destroyed the bags of money that rich tradesmen had piled up, and had given the Bible to the people.

Do-Best was above both the others, and carried a bishop's cross. Do-Well and Do-Better crowned him as king. Thought then sent the dreamer to Wit, who told him that Do-Well lived in the Castle (the Human Body) made by Kynde (Nature), who dwelt there with Anima (the Soul). Do-Well defended Anima's possessions; Do-Better, the daughter of Do-Well, acted as her handmaid; and Do-Best guided her ways of holiness. The dreaming man was then passed on to Clergy, who told him of the corruption in the church, and prophesied that a king should come to put the monks to penance for breaking their rules.

In another dream Conscience took the poet to dine with Clergy. The meats were psalms and texts. After the dinner there appeared a man named Hawkyn, an active man, who was always so busy that he could not keep his coat clean, but slept in it instead. Conscience had therefore to set to work, and teach him how it might be made presentable.

Later on, in the visions, Anima (the Soul) spoke to the poet, and advised him to go straight to Christ, who was among them under the name of Freewill and acting as a gardener in a garden where a tree bore on its branches the fruits of Charity. A little time after, the poet saw Charity appearing as the Good Samaritan; and then some one who was like both the Samaritan and Piers. He is told by Faith that it is really Jesus, who has gone to combat Satan in the dress of Piers. Christ is afterwards shown to have been in Do-Well, Do-Better, and Do-Best. The whole meaning of the poem appears to be an insistence

upon the absorption of the nature of Christ into the human being, in order to bring the mortal into closer union with the Eternal God. The poem ends with disaster, for its great idea is hampered by the actual conditions of the world. Anti-Christ comes in a man's form to destroy Truth. Conscience is deprived of all its power; Piers himself, who represents, under ordinary circumstances, the perfect Christian, is attacked by Pride. Langland is left lamenting that the only hope for mankind is earnestly to continue to search for Christ.

The *Vision* is in fact a complicated allegory. Langland was genuinely touched with two ideas. He was put to sore grief by seeing around him so much absolute want and starvation; and he had an intense dislike for the doctrines of the Church of Rome.

It was impossible for him to control the vein of bitter satire which flowed so freely in his nature; even when his most ardent sympathies were aroused, their effect was injured by his want of restraint. The scene he devised between Piers and Hunger illustrates this excess. Hunger comes down to Piers' half-acre to see why the people working there make such complaints:

"'I wot well, quoth Hunger, 'What sickness them aileth;
They have eaten over-much. That makes them groan often.
I command thee,' quoth Hunger, 'If thou desire thy health,
That thou drink in no day till thou have dined somewhat.
Eat not, I command thee, till Hunger take thee,
And send thee some of his sauce, to savour thee the better;
Keep some till supper-time, and sit thou not too long—
Arise up before appetite hath eaten his fill.
Let not Sir Surfeit sit at thy board—
Love him not, for he is a glutton, and dainty of tongue—
After many meats, his maw is still greedy.
But if you diet him thus, I dare lay both my ears
That Physic shall his furred hood for his food sell,
And even his cloak of Calabrian fur, with buttons of gold;
And be glad, by my faith, his physic to forsake,
And learn to labour with land, lest livelihood fail,
There be more liars than leeches—our Lord make amends for them.
They make men die through their drink more than destiny would.'

"'By Saint Paul,' quoth Piers, 'these be profitable words,
This is a lovely lesson! Our Lord requite thee for it!
Go thou now wherever thy will is. Well be it with thee for ever.'"

"'I promise thee,' quoth Hunger, 'That hence I will not go,
E'er I have dined this day, and drunk as well.'

"'I have no penny,' quoth Piers, 'to buy a pullets with,
Neither geese nor pigs, but two green cheeses,
And a few curds and cream, and an unleavened cake,
And a loaf of beans and bran, baked for my children.

Savour, give thee an appetite.

And I say, by my soul, I have no salt bacon,
Nor any small fowls, by Christ, collops to make.
But I have onions and parsley, and many cabbages,
And also a cow and a calf, and a cart mare
To draw a-field the dung, while the drought lasts.
By this livelihood must I live till Lammas time,
By that I hope to have harvest in my croft;
Then may I prepare the dinner, as thou dearly likest.'

"All the poor people pease-cods fetched;
Baked beans in bread, they brought in their laps
Onions, chopped meat, and ripe cherries many,
And proffered Piers this present, to appease Hunger with.

"Hunger ate this in haste, and asked for more,
Then this folk for fear fetched him many
Onions and pease, for these would please him.
From the time that they were eaten would he take his leave,
Till it neared the harvest, when the new corn came to the market.
Then were those people glad, and fed Hunger eagerly
With good ale and gluttony, and sent him to sleep;
And then would not the rascal work, but wandered about;
And no beggar would eat bread that had beans in it,
But fine bread, and breakfast bread made of clean wheat,
And no half-penny ale would they in any wise drink,
Except of the best and the brownest that the brewers sell.

"Labourers that have no land to live on except their hands,
Deign not to dine to-day on vegetable a night old;
No penny ale satisfies them, nor any piece of bacon,
Unless it were fresh flesh, or else fish fried
Both hot and very hot, to prevent a chill to their maw.

"He must be hired at high wage, else he will chide,
And say he was a workman born to curse the time;
And he would curse the king and all his council after
For having formed such laws to chasten the labourers.

"But while Hunger was master here, no one dared chide
Or strive against the statutes, so sternly he looked.

"I warn you all, workmen, earn while ye may—
Hunger hitherward again hieth him quickly.
Ere five years be fulfilled, such famine shall arise
Through floods and foul weather, that fruits shall fail."

Collops, small slices.

15. Summary.

It is convenient to arrange the history of the English language into periods, the features of which are illustrated by the various books of which we speak. To the first period, which may be taken as extending from 400 to 950 A.D., English was a pure language, although containing several dialects; but it had hardly any Danish or Latin words in it. From 950 to 1120 there came a great influx of Danish influence, so that thousands of the Old English poetic words were lost. For the next hundred years, 1120 to 1220, the inflexions, especially in the

north and east, were destroyed, and a great change was made in the way that sentences were put together. From 1220 to 1280 hundreds of Teutonic prose words were lost, and the art of compounding words which had once been very prevalent also disappeared. The upper classes, during this time, gave up English for French. Between 1280 and 1362 the loss of the Teutonic words was made up by the adoption of multitudes of French words, which resulted in the formation of the New English. Then we come to the days of Robert Mannyng, Langland, and Chaucer.

We will now take a brief view of the books mentioned in the last chapter. Layamon's *Brut*, Orm's *Ormulum*, the *Ancren Riwle*, *Genesis and Exodus*, and the *Owl and the Nightingale* may all be regarded as genuinely English. The *Lay of Havelok* and *King Horn* both have a certain quantity of French in them, but their tone and spirit is English throughout.

In Robert of Gloucester's *History* we are well on to the time when French words multiplied enormously. His own remarks on the subject of the two languages show what a definite opinion he had of the matter himself. Robert of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne* marks the completion of the New English; the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* and the *Cursor Mundi* hardly show it to the same degree, though both are full of French. Langland, on the other hand, more archaic in many ways than Chaucer, was almost as much affected by it as Robert Mannyng.

The writings of Layamon, Orm, and the compilers of the *Cursor Mundi* illustrate a point already referred to, that the Old English poetry had a longer life than the Old English prose. Still it was so fundamentally different from the Romance poetry that in the end it was bound to succumb. The chief features of the Teutonic poetry were alliteration and accent, while those of Romance poetry were metre and rhyme. Yet there had been from the earliest English times a taste on the part of the people for simple jingles of vowels. "Sac and soc," "frith and grith," "might and right," "eorl and ceorl," "sot and lot" are all examples of this tendency.

Rhymes, too, can be occasionally found in the Anglo-Saxon poetry; and when once the Conquest was an established fact, the tendency to use them developed into a habit. To the clergy as well, rhymed Latin verse had long been familiar, and after the Conquest it was imitated by them in their own writings.

England had unconsciously got ready to adopt the Romance manner; for immediately after the Conquest, when rhymes appeared, alliteration began to die. From that time English poetry divided into two different kinds. The old Teutonic alliteration was preserved in Layamon's *Brut* and in Langland's

Piers Plowman; but these were in the verse of the people as the native minstrels sang it. On the other hand, the metre of Romance rhymes can be seen in Robert of Gloucester and in the work of William of Palerne, who wrote a *Romance* in the dialect of Shropshire about 1350. Chaucer, above all, is the master of Romantic metres. The most striking example of the divergence between these two schools of poetry is the case of Langland previously referred to, when Chaucer, Gower, and others resolutely refused to follow this manner of versification. From the times of Langland and Chaucer the Romance methods were victorious, and the Teutonic system disappeared. Our modern poetry, both in thought and in expression, is essentially Romance.

The result was that the same thing happened both in literature and in civilisation. The cultivation of Rome, whether it came ecclesiastically through the church or popularly through the Norman-French, modified and expanded the native institutions and language of England. The Teutonic races had been deficient in imagination and often lacking in taste. The new literature, both Latin and English, which sprang up in England after the Conquest had its roots in Greece, Rome, Normandy, and Provence, and not in Sleswick and Wessex. The Norman system of government touched the constitutional conditions of the country to an enormous extent, and gave England for the first time a real place among the nations of Europe. The struggle of different languages and the conflict of different dialects in like manner expanded her native tongue and broadened her thought. She was then enabled to accomplish work which she could not have attempted in Old English times.

VI. CHAUCER.

16. Incidents in the Life of Chaucer.

The exact year of Chaucer's birth is not known, but it seems to have been about 1340. His grandfather and father had both been vintners, or what at the present day would be called tavern-keepers. The family name, Chaucer, is a word connected with the French *Chaussure*, and signifies a shoemaker. It is one of frequent occurrence during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, especially in London and the eastern counties. The possession of such a name probably implies that the owners belonged to the well-to-do tradesman class.

The first definite information that we have about Geoffrey Chaucer is that he was in the service of Elizabeth de Burgh, Countess of Ulster, who was married to Lionel, Duke of Clarence, one of the sons of Edward the Third. What

Chaucer's position was in the household of the countess has not been clearly ascertained; but, from some indirect evidence, it seems that he went to the French war in the suite of the duke, or even of the king himself. During the war he was taken prisoner by the French; and in March, 1360, the king contributed the sum of sixteen pounds, the equivalent of two hundred and forty pounds at the present day, towards his ransom. For the next seven years, we have little knowledge of his career. He became a member of the king's household, for in 1367 Edward granted him a pension, or annual salary, for life of 20 marks—nearly two hundred pounds at the present day—and in the document which gives him this grant, the king speaks of him as *dilectus valettus noster*, "our honoured servant," which shows that he was already held in high esteem. The result of the grant was to raise Chaucer to the position of a yeoman of the king's chamber. Here his duties were those of an ordinary personal servant, and included the serving in the lord's chamber, the making of beds, the holding and carrying of torches, and doing the other things that the king or the chamberlain might require. By 1368, however, he had become an esquire of lesser degree. This gave him the right of bearing arms, and the nature of his duties was immediately changed. The esquires of the king's household had an important office to fill with regard to the king's guests. In the afternoons and evenings it was their duty to attend the chambers of the different lords within the court, and "there to keep honest company after their cunning, in talking of chronicles of kings and of other policies, or in piping or harping to help to occupy the court, and accompanying strangers till the time require of departing." For work of this kind, which demanded tact and ability and knowledge of both books and men, Chaucer seems to have been admirably fit. We shall presently see from his poems how wide a knowledge he had of his fellow-creatures, and how keenly he observed the foibles and good points of people's characters. The natural gifts which he possessed were cultivated and expanded, much to his advantage, by this experience at court.

Chaucer seems always to have received patronage and kindness from John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, a son of Edward the Third, who had married the sister of the Countess of Ulster, Chaucer's first patroness. In 1369 the Duchess of Lancaster died; and Chaucer composed a poem known as the *Deth of Blaunche the Duchesse*, an allegorical lament for her decease. Chaucer himself had married a young lady who was in the service of the queen, as one of the "damoiselles of the chamber," and it is believed that she was a daughter of Sir

Payne Roet of Hainault. If this were the case, Chaucer would have been brought into still closer contact with John of Gaunt, for in after years the Duke married Sir Payne Roet's younger daughter; and the favour always shown to Chaucer by members of the House of Lancaster makes this suggestion very probable.

Chaucer received conspicuous marks of favour in 1370, when he was sent abroad on the king's service. Two years later he was made member of a commission to treat with the Duke and citizens of Genoa for some port in England where Genoese merchants might settle and trade. In the course of his studies—for Chaucer was always an ardent reader—he had made himself acquainted with the Italian language; and this, doubtless, influenced his choice for the appointment. He visited not only Genoa, but Florence as well, and it is quite possible to believe that he went on as far as Padua to make the acquaintance of the poet Petrarch.

On his return from the Genoese mission, official work was given him again. He received pensions for what he had done on the Continent, and he was made Comptroller of the Customs in the port of London. In 1377 he was despatched on a secret diplomatic mission to Flanders, and later on in the year to France for a similar purpose. King Edward died in 1377; but the advisers of the young king, Richard the Second, were friendly to Chaucer, and until the early months of 1379 he was continued in his diplomatic office. The most important event was a special mission to Lombardy, when his stay in Italy lasted more than a year, and here he seems to have largely increased his knowledge of Italian thought and learning.

For rather more than five years longer Chaucer was continued in his duties as Comptroller of the Customs. In 1385, having a short period of leave granted him, he went on his immortal pilgrimage to Canterbury. He sat in Parliament for a short time towards the end of 1386; but when John of Gaunt was overthrown by the Duke of Gloucester, another son of Edward III., Chaucer was immediately removed from his office.

It is believed that his wife died in 1387, for there is no record of the payment of her pension after that year. By his dismissal he lost the larger part of his own income, and was reduced at once to great poverty. It was not until 1389 that his fortunes began to mend. John of Gaunt in that year again won political power, and Chaucer at once obtained employment from him. He was given the office of Clerk of the King's Works at Westminster Palace, the Tower of London, and various royal manors. His appointment lasted only a little time, and then he went through four years of extreme poverty,

until Richard the Second, in 1394, granted him twenty pounds a year for life. Henry the Fourth, the son of John of Gaunt, did even more. He added to Richard's pension another forty marks a year, and Chaucer was able to make a comfortable home for his old age. He took a house at Westminster, in the Chapel Garden, and died within ten months of entering upon possession. He was buried in St. Benet's Chapel, in Westminster Abbey, at the spot that, since his time, has been known as the Poet's Corner.

17. The works of Chaucer.

The poems of Chaucer are too numerous to be all dealt with here, and the interest of many of them depends upon their philological points rather than their verse. Those now to be mentioned illustrate the various phases of Chaucer's life, and give us an insight into his character and mind.

The first one is the *Exclamacion of the Dethe of Pite*, the date of which was, until lately, supposed to be about 1362. It is now regarded as the work of some twenty years later. A strain of melancholy runs through it, and on this account it has been supposed that it contains some reference to a real occurrence in Chaucer's early life. The poet tries to complain to Pity for the cruelty with which Love has treated him; and when, after many years of waiting, he at last gets an interview with Pity, he finds her dead, buried in his lady's heart, so that his petition is absolutely useless. On evidence so slight as this it has been attempted to prove that Chaucer was the victim of a sad and mysterious love affair. Whether founded on fact or not, the poem itself is charming, graceful in expression, fanciful, yet pathetic in idea.

The *Deth of Blaunche the Duchesse* was Chaucer's lament for one of his kind patrons, and his expression of sympathy for her husband's sorrow. The most touching lines are those in which the widower is made to speak of the pure happiness of his marriage:

> "For truly that sweet wight (the Duchess),
> When I had wrong and she the right,
> Would always so faithfully
> Forgive me, and so cheerfully."

The elegy had faults which Chaucer avoided in his later days, but its merits were enough to show promise of a true poet's career.

Between the years 1370 and 1380 Chaucer wrote very little; he was better employed with his diplomatic work on the Continent. His best poetry did not appear until after his return from Italy, and was produced with comparative slowness. It

then bore distinct traces of the knowledge that he had acquired by contact with many men.

The chief productions of these ten years are the *Lyf of Seint Cecyle*, the *Story of Grisilde*, and the *Story of Constaunce*, all of which were introduced with some alterations into the *Canterbury Tales*. The first of these pieces, known afterwards as the *Second Nun's Tale*, shows reminiscences in its Prologue of the *Golden Legend*; and an *Invocation to the Virgin*, which follows the Prologue, is a close copy of part of a canto of Dante's *Paradiso*. These two portions are superior to the rest of the poem. It seems likely that the story was written at an early stage, before Chaucer had seen any continental life at all; and that the Prologue and the Invocation were added afterwards.

The well-known story of Grisilde, called afterwards the *Clerke's Tale*, had been put into Italian verse by Boccaccio, who recited it in that form to his friend, the poet Petrarch. It was not a new story, but Petrarch was so touched by its incidents that he wrote it out himself in Latin, and amplified it considerably. Chaucer followed Petrarch very carefully, though he expanded the pathetic portions, and added some touches distinctly his own. On using it later as a Canterbury Tale, he put it into the mouth of the Clerk of Oxenford, and made him declare that he had learned it at Padua from "Fraunceys Petrark, the laureat poete." Quite apart from the pathos and interest of the tale, Chaucer shows in its versification a greater command of the seven-lined stanza than he had ever done before.

The story of Grisilde illustrated the virtue of Obedience; that of Constance dealt with Fortitude. Chaucer had not yet learned how to create a story for himself, and in the case of Constance's history the material was poor and improbable. Chaucer's source was an Anglo-Norman Chronicle, written by Nicholas Trivet, a Dominican friar, a voluminous writer of commentaries on the authors of the Middle Ages. Chaucer obtained his facts from Trivet, but shortened the tale, and added many lines of his own. These lines form the best part of the work, and show that he was becoming conscious of his power, and was feeling able to write with a freer hand.

We must pass over a large mass of work, the best of which is possibly the translation of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, the treatise so beloved by Alfred the Great. Chaucer's translation is not a very clear one, but its importance lies in the influence that the teachings of Boethius exercised over him during the remainder of his days. The *Consolation* was written sometime between 1380 and 1383, and about two years later

came the best and most finished piece of work that he had yet produced. This is the *Parlement of Foules*, a charming allegory, the meaning of which has only of late been interpreted.

Chaucer in a dream sees on St. Valentine's Day an assembly of all the birds, with the goddess Nature presiding over them in state. The festival is the one where every bird chooses his mate, and the tercel, or royal male eagle, begins with a claim to the heart of the fair formel, or royal female eagle, who is sitting upon Nature's hand. Two other tercels at the same time beg for the same favour from the formel. Nature asks the fowls which of the three tercels is the worthiest, and a discussion ensues, which is broken by interruptions. At last the formel is told to speak for herself; in reply, she begs for a respite until the year be done, and after that to be allowed to have her choice all free. This request is eventually granted to her, and the other birds proceed to choose their own mates. A roundel is then sung, and the assembly is dispersed.

Underneath this pretty fable lies a political meaning. The formel signifies the Princess Anne of Bohemia; the tercel, Richard the Second of England. Anne had been betrothed, first of all, to a Prince of Bohemia, and, secondly, to a Margrave of Misnia. These were the two tercels of the lower kind. Richard the Second, in the end, married Anne of Bohemia just "when the year was done"; and Chaucer, in all probability, wrote his poetical effusion at her express command.

Two other poems come before the *Canterbury Tales*. They are known as the *Hous of Fame* and the *Legende of Good Women*, and both of them are left in an unfinished condition. The first relates Chaucer's experiences in a dream, when he fancies himself on a large sandy plain, and sees a golden eagle flying towards him. The eagle seizes Chaucer and bears him aloft, telling him not to fear, since it is sent as a messenger from Jove. Its duty is to relieve Chaucer from the dulness of his life, and to show him the *Hous of Fame*, where he will find much to entertain him. When they come near to the house, Chaucer sees that it is of gold, built on a block of ice. The Goddess of Fame sits on a throne of ruby in a vast hall set round with pillars, where the famous writers of bygone days are standing. The ice foundation is covered with names that have been carved thereon, but many of them are melted by the heat of the sun. Crowds of people are attempting to enter the house to seek for fame. Chaucer is content to wait outside, and to be satisfied with the knowledge that he is doing the best he can at his work.

It is interesting in this poem to trace the influence on Chaucer

of both Dante and Boethius. The whole idea of the *Hous of Fame* is in imitation of Dante, and the strong philosophical tinge running through it is due entirely to the *Consolation of Philosophy*. Though full of learning, the poem lacks freedom of execution, and wants balance and interest of story. It is not nearly so satisfactory as the much lighter *Parlement of Foules*; but the methods successfully used in that poem would have been out of place in the *Hous of Fame*. Chaucer's want of success possibly helped him to realise that his true capacity lay in the study of men and women as he knew them in the actual world.

The *Hous of Fame* was followed by the *Legende of Good Women*, which was originally intended to consist of a Prologue and twenty stories of women famous for having been true in their love. The last of these was to be that of Alcestis, the hero-queen who yielded up her own life to save her husband's. Only nine were finished, all of them drawn from Ovid, Virgil, and Boccaccio. The sameness of theme to a considerable extent dulls their interest, while Chaucer's skill is hampered by the limitations put upon him. The best part of the poem is consequently the Prologue, where he speaks his own matter in his own words, and gives a delightful account of his love for books and of his admiration for the daisy. His poetry for many years had shown traces of hard book work, of the acquisition and employment of masses of learning, of punctilious efforts to make all his writing as scholarly as possible. But there generally had been absent from it, except in detached passages, the feature which gives the peculiar pleasure belonging only to poetry—the expression by the poet of his own thoughts, the opening of his heart and mind to his reader. This flaw in his work Chaucer, by 1384, seems fully to have realised, and in his next writings he devoted all his skill to making his verse natural and simple.

18. The Canterbury Pilgrims.

In the year 1385 a short leave of absence from the custom-house gave Chaucer an opportunity of joining in a pilgrimage to Canterbury. The result was the production of a lengthy poem, the scheme of which, modelled on actual occurrences, was simplicity itself. At a certain inn in Southwark some nine-and-twenty or thirty people were described as meeting, who were all going to visit the tomb of Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral. Chaucer joined them as one of their number, and was delighted with the different types of character that they presented to him. The landlord of the inn, a merry, burly man, willingly undertook to act as a kind of manager of the expedition. The pilgrims were glad to welcome this companionship, for

travelling in the fourteenth century was none too safe for solitary individuals, and the larger the party the less the chance of danger. The landlord made an excellent suggestion—that each of the company should engage to tell four tales on the journey, two on the way down and two on the way back, for the amusement and edification of the rest. The teller of the best stories was then to be rewarded by a supper, to the cost of which all the pilgrims should contribute; the landlord being shrewd enough to stipulate that the feast should be given at his inn.

Chaucer tells us all these things in his liveliest and pleasantest manner in some preliminary verses called the *Prologue*, and adds an exquisite description of each one of the pilgrims. These are famous studies of human character, and stand at the head of Chaucer's work. They are supplemented with other clever verses in the same vein, which appear between the *Tales*, and are full of additional touches of description. In the *Prologue* and these connecting verses Chaucer shows a complete control over language and versification, a strong and highly cultivated sense of humour, a feeling of almost boyish cheerfulness and good spirits, and a kindly attitude towards every one, however quaint or provoking they may be. There cannot be found a more clever or more perfect picture of frank enjoyment, no review of human beings being so full of keen satire, or so free from any touch of downright malice.

The list of Chaucer's pilgrims has been so often given that to repeat it seems almost unnecessary. There is, however, one important feature to which attention cannot be too often directed. The first charm of the *Prologue* is most certainly in its descriptions of the different pilgrims. To read and understand it is to see all the characters passing before us in one long procession. We can form a clear and distinct picture of each one in our mind; they stand before us as if they were alive. Then we shall find, as we get to know the *Prologue* better, that each of the pictures can tell us something beyond the study of the one individual whom it represents. It will also give us an insight as to his or her social position; it will enable us to see, far more clearly than we do now, the differences that exist between the various classes of a nation. We shall realise a point often overlooked, that the costumes of the Middle Ages showed at once the rank of the wearer. There was in consequence little chance of a man of undesirable qualities being mistaken for something better than he really was. The society of the Middle Ages was necessarily a frank and open society, since in it the exact standing of every person was clearly defined; and a mass of people, previously unknown to one another,

could meet and mingle sociably in a manner impossible at the present day.

We shall see this point well brought out if we consider the various groups into which the pilgrims might be separated. The military life was represented by a gallant Knight, a soldier of the Cross, who had just come back to England from a voyage in the East; by the Squire, the Knight's son; and by the Yeoman, the Knight's servant.

Of the Knight Chaucer speaks in the lines which are among the most famous in the *Canterbury Tales*:

"At mortal battles had he been fifteen,
And foughten for our faith at Tramyssene
Thrice in the lists, and always slain his foe.
And this same worthy knight had been also
For some time with the Lord of Palatye
Against another heathen in Turkye;
And evermore he had a sovereign price;
And though that he was worthy, he was wise,
And of his port as meek as is a maid,
He never yet had any foul thing said,
In all his life, unto no maner wight;
He was a very perfect, gentle knight."

Foughten. This verb belonged to the strong conjugation, which made its past tense with the suffix -en. Words like *brought* and *sought* belonged to the weak conjugation.

Tramyssene, Tramassen, a Moorish kingdom in Africa.

Palatye, Palathia, in Anatolia, one of the lordships held by the Christian knights after the Turkish conquest. Anatolia is now known as Asia Minor.

Had a sovereign price, held in the highest estimation by everybody with whom he came into contact.

No maner wight, to any person in any condition.

The Squire, the Knight's son, is vividly drawn in a few lines. They give an excellent picture of a healthy, well-bred young Englishman, who had the sense to model himself upon his own father.

"With him there was his son, a young Squyèr,
A lover, and a lusty bachelor,
With curly locks, as they were laid in press.
Of twenty years of age he was, I guess.
Of his stature he was of even length,
And wonderly deliver, great of strength.
And he had been sometime in chivalry,
In Flanders, in Artois, and Picardy,
And borne him well, as of so little space,

Bachelor, a young man aspiring to knighthood.

Stature of even length, of medium height.

Wonderly deliver, wonderfully active, or nimble.

As of so little space, thinking himself of little importance. Not conceited.

In hope to stand well in his lady's grace.
Embroidered was he, as it were a mede,
All full of freshest flowers, white and red,
Singing he was, or fluting, all the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.
Short was his gown, with sleeves both long and wide.
Well could he sit his horse, and fairè ride.
Songs could he make, and verses well indite,
Joust, and eke dance, and well pourtray and write. . . .
Courteous he was; modest; and serviceable,
And carved before his father at the table."

Mede, a meadow.
Flowers, white and red, white and red roses; the flowers of love and knighthood.
Short was his gown, the short tunic was the fashion of the time.
Faire, gracefully.
Joust, take his part in a tournament.
Eke, also. **Pourtray**, draw, illuminate.

The Yeoman, who was servant to the Knight and the Squire, was a big, honest man—

"And he was clad in coat and hood of green;
A sheaf of peacock arrows bright and keen
Under his belt he bore full thriftily,
(Well could he dress his tackle yeomanly
His arrows droopèd not with feathers low,)
And in his hand he bore a mighty bow.
A nuthead had he, with a brown visàge.
Of woodcraft knew he well all the usàge.
Upon his arm he bare a gay bracer,
And by his side, a sword and bokeler,
And on the other side, a gay daggèr,
Harnessèd well, and sharp as point of spear;
A Cristofre on his breast of silver sheen.
A horn he bare, the bawdrik was of green;
A forester was he truly, I think."

Thriftily, becomingly.
Yeomanly, in a true yeomanlike fashion.
His arrows never drooped. The feathers were never allowed to remain crushed. They stood out, erect and regular, ready, at any time, for use.
Nut-head, a closely shaved head.
Bracer, a bowman's arm-guard. **Bokeler**, a buckler, or shield.
A Cristofre, a figure of St. Christopher, used as a brooch, supposed to possess the power of shielding the person who wore it from hidden dangers.
Sheen, bright; beautiful.
Bawdrik, a belt or girdle, worn across the chest.

Three people thus represented active service. Eleven were present as members of the Church. The chief among these was a lady—a Prioress—who had as her suite her Chapeleyn, or Secretary, spoken of also as the Second Nun, and three Priests.

The Prioress was of dainty and polished manners, very tender-hearted.

Next to the Prioress in rank came a Monk, a man who was quite capable of being an Abbot—apparently one possessed of means, for he had many a good horse in his stable, and well-bred greyhounds in his kennels ;

> "For riding hard and hunting of the hare
> Was all his taste, and no cost would he spare."

His dress was perhaps a trifle worldly:

> "I saw his sleeves embroidered at the hand
> With fur, and that the finest in the land ;
> And for to fast his hood under his chin,
> He had of gold y-wrought a curious pin,
> A love-knot in the greater end there was."

Y-wrought, worked, made.

The lower offices of the church were represented by three men—a Friar, a Sompnour, and a Pardoner. The first of these was what was known as a Limiter—a person licensed to beg, but limited to one particular district, a man of plenty of self-possession, with a quick and fluent tongue, which stood him in good stead for his begging. The second was a man whose duty was the summoning of persons who had broken the ecclesiastical law. The Pardoner sold pardons ; and carried about with him relics of the saints, which the faithful could kiss on payment of a groat.

The famous study of a poor Parson puts the other side of clerical life well into view ; and the spirit in which it is written shows plainly what genuine respect, in spite of his keen eye and sharp tongue, Chaucer himself had for a thoroughly good man. Of the Parson he writes :

> "Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,
> Yet never ceasèd he for rain or thunder
> In sickness or misfortune to visit
> The farthest in his parish, much or lyte,
> Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff.
> This noble example to his sheep he gave
> That first he wrought, and afterwards he taught ;
> Out of the gospels he the wordès caught,
> And this figure he added eke thereto,
> That if gold rustè, what shall iron do ?
> For if a priest be false, on whom we trust,
> No wonder is an unlearned man to rust."

Much, of high position. **Lyte**, little, poor.

The brother of the Parson was almost as honest and good. A Ploughman by occupation, he applied to his humble work the best principles of his brother's teaching. Chaucer has written

few things more just or more fine than his analysis of these two poor men.

"With him there was a ploughman, was his brother— . . .
An honest labourer, and a good was he,
Living in peace and perfect charity.
God loved he best, with all his holè hertè,
At any time, though him it pleased or smertè,
And then his neighbour rightly as himself.
He oft would thresh, and also dyke and delve
For Christ His sake for every poor wight,
Withouten hire, if it lay in his might.
His tithes he ever paid full fair and well,
Both of his own labòur, and his catèl.
In a tabard, he rode upon a mare."

Herte, heart. **Smerte**, displeased.
It lay in his might, if only it was in his power. **Catel**, cattle; property.
Tabard, originally a herald's coat, then a loose blouse worn by ploughmen.
Rode upon a mare, people of quality thought this an undignified thing to do.

The Clerk of Oxford, who had not yet got a living, made a worthy companion to the Parson and the Ploughman. He was as fond of learning, and of teaching others to learn, as the Parson was of looking after his parish. The Parson and the Clerk represent the best and purest aspects of the Church that are to be found at the end of the fourteenth century.

"A Clerk there was of Oxenford also,
That unto logic had gone long ago;
As lenè was his horse as is a rake,
And he was not right fat, I undertake,
But hollow looked, and thereto soberly;
Full threadbare was his upper courtepy,
For he had got him yet no benefice,
Nor was so worldly as to take office.
For he would rather have at his bed's head,
Twenty bookès, clad in black or red,
Of Aristotle and his philosophy,
Than robes, or fiddles, or gay psaltery.
But although that he was a philosòpher,
Yet haddè he but little gold in coffer;
But all that he might of his frendès hentè,
On bokes and on lerninge he it spentè
And busily for the souls began to pray
Of them that gave him wherewith to scoleye
Of studie took he most care and most heed,
Not one word spake he morè than was need;

Lene, poor, lean. **Full**, quite.
Thereto soberly, In consequence sad.
Courtepy, a short upper coat or cloak.
Psaltery, a musical instrument something like a harp.
Hente, get. **Scoleye**, study.

And that was said in form and reverence,
And short and quick, and full of high sentence.
Informed with moral virtue was his speech,
And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach."

The learned professors were also represented by a Sergeant-at-law and a Doctor of medicine. The peculiar character of the first gave Chaucer an opportunity of making one of his most celebrated remarks—that

"Nowhere so busy a man as he there was,
And yet he seemèd busier than he was,"

where a whole individuality is summed up in two pungent lines. The Doctor is treated more gently. His learning and industry were fully admitted and thought highly of, but his foibles were happily touched off:

"Moderate in his diet, too, was he,
For it was of no superfluity,
But of great nourishing and digestible,
His study was but little in the Bible.
In sanguine and in pers he clad was all,
Linèd with taffeta and with sendal;
And yet he careful was in his expense,
He kept that which he made in pestilence;
For gold in physic is a cordial;
Therefore he lovèd gold in special."

Sanguine, cloth of blood-red colour.
Taffeta, a kind of silk stuff.
In pestilence, during a time of plague.
Pers, sky-blue cloth.
Sendal, a finer kind of silk.

An English country gentleman completed the list of the better class people among the pilgrims. He is described as a Franklin, which signifies a freeholder of land; and lived at his place in the country with a considerable amount of comfort. He was very well-to-do; though much of the bounty on his table was due to the fact that the game and meat that he killed were his own, and the fruit and vegetables were grown in his orchard and gardens. His table, laden with food,

"in his hall alway,
Stood ready covered all the longè day."

He took great interest in public affairs, doing the best he could for the help of his poorer neighbours.

"At sessions there was he lord and sire;
And oftentimes he was knight of the shire.
A dagger, and a gypser all of silk,
Hung at his girdle, white as morning milk.
A sheriff had he been, and auditor;
Was nowhere such a worthy vavasour."

Gypser, a pouch or purse.
Vavasour, a landholder, in rank next to a baron.

As strongly opposed to these excellent persons, there was a curious knot of men of varying occupations, none of whom practised their callings with any particular honesty. The first of these was

"A Merchant . . . with a forkèd beard,
In mottelee and high on horse he sat;
Upon his head a Flemish beaver hat;
His boots were claspèd fair and fetisly;
His reasons spake he very solemnly,
Sounding always the increase of his gains; . . .
Well knew he how to profit in exchange.
This worthy man full well his wit beset;
There was no man who knew he was in debt,
So careful was he of his governance
With his bargains and with his mortgages."

Mottelee, parti-coloured clothes. **Beset**, used, employed.
Fetisly, neatly.

The Miller was another of this set—a man well practised at stealing corn, and taking his tolls three times over. He was big-boned and stout, with a bushy red beard and a large wart on the right side of his nose, from which a tuft of bristles sprouted. His nostrils were big and black, and his one accomplishment was playing on the bagpipe.

The others included a Cook, a Shipman, a Reeve, or Farm Bailiff, and a Manciple, one who provides the food for the members of the Inns of Court. This term is still in use at the University of Oxford, and signifies the purveyor of food at a college.

In direct opposition to these six doubtful characters, there was a knot of five respectable London tradesmen—a Haberdasher, a Dyer, a Weaver, a Tapestry-maker, and a Carpenter. They were all members of the same guild, and were

"clothèd all in one livery
Of a solemn and great fraternity."

The term "solemn" probably refers to a species of Freemasonry, which was bestowed upon the licensed workers of certain particular trades.

We have left to the last one of the most important characters of the company—the only woman present except the Prioress and her nun. This person was known as the Wife of Bath, from the fact of her having a great business of cloth making in that town. She surpassed in skill even the famous manufacturers of Ypres and of Ghent. When she went to her parish church, she was infuriated if any one dared to precede her in going to the altar. She was famous for the beautiful handkerchiefs that she wore; her hose were of brilliant scarlet, and her shoes were always soft and new. The use she made of her wealth was not so much to stay at home and lead a

domestic life as to travel widely in foreign parts. She had been thrice to Jerusalem; and had visited many of the famous cathedrals and shrines in Europe.

She was bold in face, with fair hair and red cheeks. She sat easily upon an ambler, wearing a large veil, and on her head a hat as broad as a buckler or a target. She also wore a pair of leggings which went down over the boots, and

"On her feet a pair of spurrès sharp."

This shows that the custom for women to ride side-saddle had not yet become universal. It was only introduced into England by Anne of Bohemia, wife of Richard the Second, the reigning king; and the Wife of Bath preferred the older fashion. Chaucer concludes his description by remarking that this good lady was a great talker, and was always ready to laugh and jest.

The list of pilgrims would be incomplete if Chaucer himself were not mentioned in it. Luckily, one reference remains. After the *Prioress's Tale* has been finished, the Host of the inn approaches Chaucer, whom he has been watching from the beginning of the journey.

"And then at last he lookèd upon me,
And saying thus, 'What man art thou?' quoth he,
'Thou lookest as thou wouldest find a hare,
For ever on the ground I see thee stare.

"'Approach more near, and look up merrily.
Now ware you, sirs, and let this man have place.
He in the waist is shapen well as I;
This were a poppet in an arm t'embrace,
For any woman, small and fair of face.
He seemeth elvish by his countenance,
For unto no wight doth he dalliance.

"'Say now somewhat, since other folk have said:
Tell us a tale of mirth, and that anon.'
'Mine host,' said I, 'Be not evil apaide,
For other tales I certainly know none,
But of a rhyme I learned years agone.'
'Yea, that is good,' said he, 'Now shall we hear
Some dainty thing, me thinketh by thy chere.'"

Dalliance, gossip, friendly talk.
Be not evil apaide, do not be dissatisfied.
Chere, expression of the face.

This little personal sketch of Chaucer is well supported by some lines about himself and his habits, which come in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*.

"And as for me, though that I can but lite
On bookès for to rede I me delite,

Can but lite, know but little.

And to hem yeve I faith and full credence,
And in mine herte have hem in reverence
So hertèly, that there is gamè none
That fro my bookès maketh me to gone:
But it be seldome on the holy daie,
Save certainly, when that the month of May
Is comen, and that I heare the foulès sing,
And that the flourès ginnen for to spring,
Farewell, my book, and my devocioun."

Hem, them. **Yeve**, give. **Hertely**, heartily.
Devocioun. Here used in the sense of strong attachment; his passion for his books. It does not mean his religious devotion, for which it is often mistaken.

The following analysis of Chaucer's studies is based on an essay by William Blake, the great poet of the latter part of the eighteenth century.

"The characters of Chaucer's pilgrims are the characters of all ages and nations. Some of the names or titles are altered by time, but the characters themselves remain for ever unaltered. They are, consequently, pictures of universal human life, beyond which nature never steps. As Newton numbered the stars, and Linnæus numbered the plants, so Chaucer numbered the classes of men. He is the great poetical observer of men, born to record and eternize their acts. This he does as a master, as a father and superior, looking down on their little follies, sometimes with severity, oftener with joke and sport. Nearly every one of Chaucer's characters is the image of a class, and not of an imperfect individual. Thus they are studies of the eternal principles that exist in all ages. Every age is a Canterbury Pilgrimage; we all pass on, each sustaining one or other of these characters. Chaucer makes each of them perfect in his kind. The Knight, whom he places first in his *Prologue*, is a true hero —a good, great, and wise man. He has spent his life in the field, has ever been a conqueror, and is that species of character which stands as the guardian of man against the oppressor. His son is like him, with a germ of perhaps greater perfection still. The Knight's Yeoman, a mighty man, is the worthy attendant of noble heroes.

"The Monk is described by Chaucer as being of the first rank in society—noble, rich, a leader of the age, with a humorous bent in his character which does not degrade him, but gives him the enjoyment of a dignified mirth. Chaucer has therefore made his Monk a tragedian, one who has studied poetical art. A man of luxury, pride, and pleasure, he is a master of art and learning, though affecting to despise it. Those who think that Chaucer's monk is intended for a buffoon or burlesque character know little of Chaucer.

"The Friar—'a full solemn man'—is eloquent, witty, and satirical; young, and handsome, and rich; a complete rogue, with gaiety enough to make him master of all the pleasures of the world. The Pardoner is a prominent character—one belonging to every age; the type of man who commands and domineers over the high and low vulgar. He comes as a rod and a scourge, for the trial of men, to divide the classes of men. His companion, the Sompnour, is an official of magnitude, especially respected in the rank of which he holds the destiny.

"As a strong contrast to the last two men stands the Parson—an Apostle, a real messenger of heaven, sent in every age for its light and warmth. This man is beloved and venerated by all, and neglected by all. He serves all, and is served by none. He is, according to Christ's definition, one of the greatest of his age; yet he is a poor Parson of a town.

"The Sergeant-at-Law is a character of considerable note—a judge, and a real master of the jurisprudence of his day. The Doctor of Physic is described as perfect, learned, completely master and doctor in his art. The Ploughman is simplicity itself, with wisdom and strength for his stamina. Benevolence is his great characteristic; he is thin with excessive labour rather than with old age. The Reeve and the Manciple represent two characters of consummate wordly wisdom. The Shipman possesses the same power, but with the highest courage added. The Clerk of Oxenford, in a certain degree, is a companion to Chaucer himself. The actual difference between him and Chaucer resembles the manner in which the contemplative philosopher varies from the poetical genius.

"The character of woman, Chaucer has divided into two classes—one represented by the Prioress; the other by the Wife of Bath. The Lady Prioress predominates in some ages, the Wife of Bath in others. The Prioress is described as of the first rank, rich and honoured. She has certain little delicate affectations not unbecoming to her, but in her nature she is always truly grand and courteous.

"With regard to the Wife of Bath, Chaucer has been minute and exact, for he looks upon her as a scourge and blight."

19. The Tales of the Pilgrimage.

The stories of the pilgrims in some cases strike a lively and cheerful note; in others, a more serious one. Most of them were written specially for the poem, but a few are revised versions of Chaucer's earlier work.

The concluding lines of the *Prologue* relate how, early in the morning of the first day, the Host of the Inn gathered the

pilgrims all together, and made them draw lots to see who should tell the opening tale. Then,

"Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
The sothe is this, the cut fil on the knyghte,
Of which ful blithe and glad was every wight. . . .
And when this goodè man saw it was so,
As he that wys was and obedient
To keep his foreword by his free assent
He seyde, 'Sin I shall bigynne the game,
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes' name,
Now lat us ride, and herkneth what I seye.'
And with that word we ryden forth oure weye,
And he began with right a myrie chere
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

Aventure, chance.
Sort, lot.
Cas, accident.
Sothe, truth.
Fil, fell.
Foreword, promise.
Sin, since.
Lat, let.
Myrie, merry.
Anon, at once.
Manere, manner.

The *Knight's Tale* was based upon a poem written by Boccaccio, called the *Teseide*. It was a history of Theseus, Duke of Athens, and was over 9000 lines long. Chaucer, for his *Knight's Tale*, selected certain portions of the *Teseide*, and to some extent founded his story upon them. His work contains a little over 2000 lines, and of these only about 270 are actual translations from Boccaccio, while another 500 are adaptations, so that more than half of the *Knight's Tale* is entirely Chaucer's own. He does not follow Boccaccio in making Duke Theseus his hero, though the character of Theseus is singularly well drawn, but rather deals with the complicated love affairs of two gentlemen of Thebes, named Palamon, and Arcite. These two were not only cousins, but bosom friends. They were taken prisoner by the duke when he besieged and captured the city of Thebes, and were removed by him to Athens. There he cast them as prisoners into a tower which overlooked the palace gardens. The affection between them, unusually warm and strong, seemed as if nothing could diminish, or still less destroy, it. An unexpected event, however, entirely changed their feelings, and produced hatred where there had formerly been genuine love. Palamon, gazing mournfully one bright May morning from their dungeon window, saw walking in the palace garden below a Beautiful Lady, and the loveliness of her face and the grace of her person so impressed him that he started back from the window crying out with a distressful exclamation. Arcite was terrified at this sudden change in Palamon, and dreaded lest the long confinement was beginning to tell upon him. Palamon hastily explained the cause of his sudden

emotion, and Arcite, looking through the bars himself, also saw the lady in the garden, and was instantly stricken with love for her, even more than Palamon had been. This unfortunate occurrence led to a deadly quarrel between the cousins, and their love and friendship for one another were entirely destroyed.

After some time of this miserable life, Arcite unexpectedly received his liberty. A certain great Duke came on a visit to Theseus, and was horrified to hear that Arcite, whom he knew and loved, was captive in Theseus' hands. The Duke pleaded so strongly for him, that Arcite was set free; but the terms of his liberty were he must at once leave Theseus' dominions; and then it seemed to him that his freedom was as nothing, since it deprived him of all chance of seeing the Beautiful Lady again.

He accordingly went to Thebes; but after passing a couple of years in great unhappiness, he disguised himself as a workman, and returned to Athens. There he obtained employment at the Duke's palace; and was then comparatively happy, for he had many opportunities of catching a glimpse of the Beautiful Lady.

Palamon meanwhile still languished in captivity. At last by the assistance of a friend he contrived to make his escape. The only place where he could conceal himself was in a thickly-wooded grove outside Athens. And it so happened that on the very day he went there, Arcite, in the course of a ride, came through the wood. The two men suddenly and unexpectedly met and recognised one another directly. They agreed to definitely settle the question of their mutual love for the Beautiful Lady by a deadly fight between them, the result of which should decide the right of one or the other to her hand. They arranged to hold their combat on the morrow in the grove, and Arcite departed to make all preparations. Next day—

"Ere it were day's light,
Two suits of armour secretly he dight,
Sufficient and fitting to maintain
The battle in the field between them twain
And on his charger, who alone him bore,
He carried all the harness him before.
And in the grove, at time and place y-set,
This Arcite and this Palamon be met.
There was no 'Good day,' nor no saluting,
But straight, without a word or rehearsing,
Each of them helpèd for to arm the other,
As friendly as he were his ownè brother;
And after that, with sharpè spearès strong,
They thrust at one another wondrous long.

Dight, prepared. Y-set, agreed upon.

Thou mightest wene that this Palamon,
In his fighting, were as a wood-liòn,
And as a cruel tiger was Arcite;
Up to the ankle fought they in their blood."

Wene, think.

That very morning, however, the Duke Theseus had gone hunting with the queen and the Beautiful Lady, the court attending them. He suddenly came upon the two men fighting desperately in his park, and swore by Mars that the one who struck another blow should die. Palamon then told him their true history—who Arcite was, who he was, and why they were at enmity. Theseus instantly condemned them both to death, but the queen and all the ladies of the company made a vigorous protest, and the duke had to revoke his sentence. He then appointed a great tournament to be held in fifty weeks, when each of the lovers was to attend with a hundred knights, and the Beautiful Lady was to be the victor's prize.

To these terms they gladly agreed, and all three hastened to make their devotions to their favourite deities. The Beautiful Lady went to the Temple of Diana, Palamon to the Temple of Venus, and Arcite to the Temple of Mars.

The descriptions of the temples are probably the best known passages of all Chaucer's work. The subjects were such as lent themselves to vivid and picturesque verse. The symbolic images dedicated to Venus; the paintings, in the Temple of Mars, of the uninhabited Thracian forest where his chief temple stood; and the still more remarkable designs in the Temple of Diana, gave Chaucer excellent material for the production of a series of powerful passages, very simple, very direct, and very effective.

The paintings which cover the walls of the temple are first described. The subject of many of them shows the punishments inflicted on mortals who have dared to insult the goddess. So the fates of Callisto, changed into a constellation; of Daphne, turned into a laurel; of Acteon, transformed into a hart, all testify to the stern judgments of an offended deity.

On the other hand, the rewards of those who please the goddess are explicitly shown. Sculptures and paintings immortalise the exploits of Atalanta and Meleager and other great hunters, and speak plainly of the one sport that Diana loved. The description closes with the fine lines upon the image of the deity herself:

"The goddess on a hart had high her seat,
Her little houndès all about her feet;
And underneath her feet she had a moon,
Waxing it was, and would be waning soon.

In fair light green her statue clothèd was;
With bow in hand, and arrows in a case;
Her eyen castè she full low adown,
Ther Pluto hath his derkè regioun."

Ther, where. Derke regioun, gloomy kingdom.

The year passed quickly, and much excitement was aroused at the prospect of the tournament. The Beautiful Lady fell into great tribulation at the fact that one of the knights, both of whom she knew loved her, was bound to be slain. To try and avert this calamity she determined to ask the aid of Diana, in whom she had so firm a trust, and accordingly built a little altar in a wood, and laid the sacred fires upon it. Then praying with all her heart, she begged that love and peace might be established between the suitors, and that they might both cease from her pursuit. She would become, she declared, a perpetual servant of Diana in her temple, and did not desire to be married to any one at all. If, however, the goddess could not do this, and if one of the knights was fated to be her husband, would Diana let it be the one that really loved her best, because she could not tell for herself which of the two that one was.

As soon as her supplications were ended, the altar-fires were consumed with heavenly flame, and Diana herself appeared, calm and magnificent. She told her suitor that the matter had been decided in a council of the Great Gods, and that one of the knights was to fall, but that the battle must take place.

The day of the tournament at last arrived, and, as Diana had foretold, one knight met his death, and this knight was Arcite. He was carried off the field, bleeding from his wounds, but constantly calling for the Beautiful Lady. At his earnest request the Lady and Palamon went to his tent; he poured forth his sorrow at leaving her; and, entreating her not to forget Palamon, commended him to her love, and died. His funeral was carried out with the greatest magnificence, and the Beautiful Lady followed the dead knight with fire in her hand, as was the custom of the time, to do the office of funeral service. But her emotions was so touched that when she made the fire, she swooned away, and had to be carried from the field. There was a lapse of many years before the death of Arcite could be forgotten, and during all that time Palamon had to wait patiently for her. At last they were wed, and the rest of their lives was spent in happiness and prosperity.

The telling of the story is not really as interesting as the idea seems to deserve. Both of the knights are so lightly sketched that it is difficult to have much sympathy with either. Palamon, so far as we see him, is a true and constant lover; Arcite, a more emotional man, is direfully perplexed between

love and honour. The Beautiful Lady herself is not drawn in such a way as to make any very strong impression. The study of the somewhat contradictory nature of Theseus is far more carefully worked out. The two prisoners catching their first sight of the Beautiful Lady; their meeting in the grove; their fight and its result; the death of Arcite; and especially the accounts of the various Temples, are all striking in their point and colour. Another great merit is that the tone and feeling of the tale is thoroughly pure; the sense of honour is indicated by a man who knew himself what it implies; and the general opinion expressed by the company of pilgrims that "it was a noble story, and worthy to be drawn to memory," has been unhesitatingly accepted for four centuries.

When the turn of the Squire came to tell his story he proved himself distinctly a true son of his father. There was the same refined feeling, the same kindly way of dealing with people, the same innate sense of truth and honour. His tale has the chivalrous spirit of the *Knight's Tale*; it is a matter of regret that Chaucer left it unfinished. The exact origin of it is not known. It is based on the usual mysteries of Eastern stories, but certain passages have every mark of being essentially Chaucer's own.

It begins with a description of the court of Cambuscan, King of Sarray, in the land of Tartary, who was the father of two sons and one beautiful daughter, named Canace. It was his custom to hold a splendid feast every year on his birthday; and at the anniversary which marked the twentieth year of his reign a surprising incident occurred. The king and his Court were sitting in state, while his musicians played, when suddenly a strange knight rode up to the palace, and instead of dismounting, guided his steed through the open doors of the banqueting hall, until he came close up to the high table. The extraordinary thing was that his steed was not an animal of flesh and blood, but a Horse of Brass.

The stranger was fully armed, except on his head, which was bare, and his air and manner were so graceful and courteous that no feeling of indignation could be felt at what looked like an intrusion. He addressed himself to the king, and spoke in a musical and modulated voice that made itself heard distinctly throughout the hall. He declared himself to be an emissary from his master, the King of Arabia and India, who sent to King Cambuscan, in honour of his feast-day, the present of the famous Horse of Brass. It was the work of a great

Sarray. The modern name is Tzared, near to Sarepta, on the river Volga.

Canace. Pronounced as three syllables.

magician, who had been able to construct it by reason of his vast astrological knowledge; the power that it possessed being that of conveying its rider to any part of the world he wished, in some time under four-and-twenty hours.

Before the king could express his astonishment and delight at this most wonderful gift, the knight called his attention to a mirror and a ring that he had with him. The mirror, on being consulted, would show truly when any evil thing was going to happen during the reign, and would also reveal to those who looked into it, whether they were friends to the king or foes. There was another quality of the mirror which would specially commend it to the Princess Canace, and therefore the mirror was brought for her rather than for the king. This gift was that of showing any lady who had set her heart upon a man, whether he was false or whether he was true.

A ring that the knight carried was also for the princess; a magic ring which, if she wore upon her thumb, or even carried in her purse, would make her to understand the language of birds, and to be able to talk to them in their own language again. It would give her also a knowledge of every herb that grew; and of how they should be used for men afflicted with wounds.

A naked sword was hanging by the knight's side, and this he now presented to the king, saying that no man could resist its stroke, and would never recover unless the king so chose. Then must the king touch the wound again with the flat of the sword, and the injury would disappear at once.

When the knight had finished his speech, he backed the Horse of Brass out of the hall, and dismounted in the court-yard. The horse stood still where he was left; and the knight was shown with great ceremony up to his chambers; and invited to unarm; and then to join the feast.

While the feast was proceeding, a large crowd of people, hearing the news, rushed into the court-yard and pressed round the horse.

"Great was the press that swarmeth to and fro
To gaze upon this horse that standeth so:
For it so high was, and so broad and long,
So well proportionèd, for to be strong,
Right as it were a steed of Lombardy;
Therewith so horse-like, and so quick of eye,
As it a fine Apulian courser were;
For truly, from his tail unto his ear,
Nor art nor nature could him not amend,
In no degree, as all the people wend.
But evermore their greatest wonder was
How that it coudè gon, and was of brass!"

Wend, supposed. Coude gon, could move.

When the first wonder had passed off, then they began to talk, and try to find out the meaning of it all.

"'My heart,' quoth one, 'is evermore in dread;
I think some men-at-arms must be therein,
Devising that this city they may win.
It were right good that if all such things we know.'
Another to his comrade whispered low,
And said, 'He lieth: it is rather like
An apparition, made by some magic,
As jugglers conjure at these banquets great.'
With sundry doubts they jangle and debate,
As common people suppose commonly
Of things that have been made more subtly
Than in their ignorance they can understand;
They judge them gladly to the badder end.

"And some of them wondered at the mirror,
That borne up was into the highest tower;
And asked how men might in it such things see.
Another answered; said it well might be
Naturally by compositions
Of angles, and of sly reflections;
And said that there in Rome was such a one.
They spoke of Aristotle, Vitulon,
And Alocen, who all wrote in their lives
Of quaint mirrors, as well as prospectives,
As if they knew the books of which they heard. . . .

"And sorely wondered some on cause of thunder,
On ebb-tide, flood, on gossamer, and mist,
And on all things until the cause they wist.
Thus they decide, and jangle, and devise,
Till that the king 'gan from his board to rise."

Vitulon. Vitellio, a Polish mathematician of the thirteenth century.
Alocen. Althazen, an Arabian astronomer of the eleventh century.
Knowe, known.

The story of the Horse of Brass does not go further than the grateful acceptance by Cambuscan of the gifts; and the second part of the *Squire's Tale* is even more fragmentary still. It relates the experiences of the Princess Canace, when she wears the magic ring, and understands the birds' talk. As Canace was one day walking in the woods her attention was attracted to an unfortunate falcon, who was beating her wings in extreme agony against the branches of a tree. She plucked her feathers from her breast, and was covered with blood. Canace went under the tree and spoke to her, and little by little made her calmer, and persuaded her to come down. The falcon unwillingly consented, but yielded at last to Canace's kindness, and nestling in her arms, told her the sad story of her love—

how a tercel dwelt near her and won her heart, but had deserted her for another bird.

" He saw upon a time a kite fly by,
And suddenly this kite he loved so
That all his love is clean from me ago.
He hath his truth dishonoured in this wise;
Thus hath the kite my love in her service,
And I am lorn, beyond all remedy."

Ago, gone.

The fragment ends with Canace's faithful nursing of the falcon. Had the story been finished, it would probably have taken the usual Eastern ending, where the bird in distress, which signifies a princess in disguise, is restored to her natural shape, and to her human lover.

Of the tales told by people belonging to or connected with the church, the Clerks' and the Prioress's occupy the chief place. The first was the story of *Grisilde*, which Chaucer had learnt from Petrarch. It was a most curious study of the virtue of patience; and, to modern ideas, is not only repulsive, but impossible. If we can once accept its fundamental theory, then the poem is one of tenderness and beautiful expression.

The Prioress, though she is shy and retiring in her disposition, is very willing to do her best when called upon. The Host asks her courteously and well.

" 'Let us seek about,
Who shall now tellen first of all this route
Another tale'; and with that word he said,
As courteously as it had been a maid,
'My Lady Prioressè, by your leave,
So that I wist I should you not aggrieve,
I would demand that ye now tellen should
A talè next, if so were that ye would.
Now will ye vouchèsauf, my lady dear?'
'Gladly,' quoth she; and said as ye shall hear."

Route, company. Vouchesauf, deign to vouchsafe.

The story which she tells is upon a theme very common in the Middle Ages—of a little Christian boy murdered by Jews for his belief in the Virgin Mary. It is one particularly suitable to a soft-hearted woman like the Prioress. The metre used is the seven-line stanza, while all the other tales are in couplets. It is probably a piece of Chaucer's early work revised and enlarged.

The *Monk's Tale* is a dreary collection of the misfortunes of certain celebrated men and women. The most striking is the terrible story of the death by starvation in prison of Ugolino of Pisa and his children, a tale taken from Dante's *Inferno*, but

one into which Chaucer put a spirit and feeling of his own. The verses are too pitiful to reprint.

The Parson would not tell a tale, but preached instead a sermon on penitence. It has been very much questioned whether this sermon was a translation done by Chaucer or not. The original of part of it is known. The other parts are not in accordance with the French discourse, nor do they at all agree with the views of Chaucer on religious matters, which can be fairly gathered from his authenticated writings. The discourse does not come within the scope of English literature at all.

The *Second Nun's Tale* has been already mentioned as also belonging to Chaucer's younger days. It gives an account of the martyrdom of St. Cecilia, and is not very interestingly told; while the *Prologue* and *Invocation* are certainly better written. Cecilia is described as being able, by a miracle, to convert her husband; and when her faithfulness and constancy are tested by her enemies, the boiling bath that for ten days' time is heated night and day remains cool to her. When the executioner attempts to cut off her head he is unable to do so even with three strokes. Upon this he refuses to proceed, for to give four strokes is forbidden by the law of the land. If any accused persons survived three strokes, they are regarded as being under the immediate protection of God. St. Cecilia lingers for three days after this brutality, and then dies, because she has prayed that she might have three days' respite and no more.

We come now to a group of the tales, of which it is difficult to speak. They show the good qualities of Chaucer's artistic work quite as well as the other tales, but they are put into the mouths of the very common section of the pilgrims, and deal with subjects pleasing only to vulgar minds. They contain, however, some of the best descriptive passages to be found in the whole range of the tales, and they are especially noticeable for their power of impressing the individualities of a character upon the reader. In the *Prologue* one seems to be brought absolutely face to face with living men and women. In the tales told by many of the pilgrims, though the tales are good and interesting, the personalities of the characters do not touch us very deeply. We feel that we know the Knight well, but we have only a faint idea of Palamon. The Prioress moves through the *Prologue* like a living woman. The patient Griselda is something of a shadow. But in the lively and vulgar stories told by the common men among the pilgrims an extraordinary capacity is shown for delineating the mere characters who come into a tale. The following sketch of the Carpenter's Wife, a young woman of eighteen, is an example of this. We have only this description

of her personal appearance; yet we seem to know her as well as we know the Prioress or the Wife of Bath.

"Fair was this youthful wife, and therewithal,
Like any weasel, her body slim and small;
She wore a girdle, gaily decked with silk;
An apron, too, as white as morning milk
Upon her loins, and full with many a gore;
White was her smock, embroidered all before
And eke behind; her collar all about,
Of coalblack silk within and eke without:
The ribbons of her snow-white voluper,
Were of the same kind as was her collar:
Her fillet broad, of silk, and set full high;
And verily she had a merry eye.
Full small and even were her eyebrows two,
And they were arched, and black as any sloe.
She was a sight more beautiful to see
Than is the fresh-leaved, early-ripe pear-tree;
And softer than the wool is of a wether;
And by her girdle hung a purse of leather;
Tasselled with green, and broidered with latoun;
In all this world, to seken up and down,
There was no man so wise that he could thenche
So gay a butterfly, or such a wench.
Full brighter was the shining of her hue,
Than in the Tower the noble, minted new;
But of her song, it was as sweet and free
As any swallow's, sitting on a tree.
Then she could skip, and make a playful game,
Like any kid, or calf, beside his dame.
Her mouth was sweet as bragot or the meeth,
Or hoard of apples, laid in hay or heath.
Winsome she was, as is a jolly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt;
A brooch she bore upon her love-collar
As broad as is the boss of a buckler;
Her shoes were laced on her ancles high."

Voluper, a woman's cap.
Latoun, latten, a metal resembling pinchbeck, composed of zinc and copper. **Noble**, a gold coin, of the value of 6s. 8d.
Seken, to search. **Thenche**, imagine.
Bragot and Meeth, sweet drinks made of spiced ale, fermented with honey.

Much the same thing may be said of the sketch of another character belonging to the same story, where outward appearance betrays the whole character. The humour of Chaucer never found such a field as it did in the tales told by the Miller, the Reve, the Friar, the Sompnour, and the Cook; and coarse though the themes may be, wickedness is never dealt with as a thing to be gloated over for its own sake. It is rather an enjoyment of hearty, if unrefined fun, than a purposed handling of

what is wrong; it is an element often found in English literature; and it is one that does far less harm than the insidious suggestions of much modern fiction.

The following is the description of the Clerk:

"Now there was of that church a parish clerk,
The which that was y-clepèd Absalom;
Curled was his hair, and as the gold it shone,
And stood out like a fan, both large and brode.
Full straight and even lay his jolly shode;
His cheeks were red; his eyes were grey as goose.
St. Paul's window was carved upon his shoes.
In scarlet hose he went most daintily,
And clad he was both neat and properly,
All in a kirtel of a light watchèt—
Full fair and thick had all the points been set.
And thereupon he had a gay surplice,
As white as is the bloom upon the rys.
A merry child he was, so God me save.
Well could he cut a vein, and clip, and shave,
And make a charter of land or acquittance.
In twenty manners could he trip and dance.

Y-cleped, called, named.
Brode, broad. **Shode**, the parting of his hair.
St. Paul's window, shoes with the pattern of the great rose window at Old St. Paul's cut in the leather.
Watchet, light blue cloth.

The tales told by the Manciple, the Shipman, and the Merchant can be dealt with in a few words. The first is taken from the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, and relates how it was that the crow became black. It seems that at first the crow was a bird with snowy plumage, wonderful powers of song, and a great capacity for speech. Phœbus kept one of these birds in a cage, and treated it as a great favourite. The bird's head was turned to a considerable extent by the attention that was paid to it, and it began to talk too freely to Phœbus about the affairs that went on in the house. The result was, that Phœbus became very much annoyed, and let his temper get the better of him. Seizing his bow, he shot a beautiful nymph, called Coronis, of whom the crow had been saying spiteful things, and killed her on the spot. Repenting at once, although it was too late, he could only wreak his vengeance on the crow, which he did by depriving it of its powers of song and speech; and by tearing off its white feathers, and replacing them with black.

We must not, however, go away with the idea that the tales of all the commoner people were objectionable. The Pardoner, scamp though he was, relieved his feelings by a Prologue, which consisted chiefly of drinking some ale and devouring some cake. Then he went on with his story, a gruesome

account of how three brothers met with death by the discovery of a treasure, over the partition of which they killed one another. This was a favourite type of tale in the Middle Ages, and is at any rate free from the blemishes which disfigure the Miller's and the Reve's productions. The same thing can be said of the Canon's Yeoman's story, a most excellent account of an alchemist, and of the trickery of his ways. The details seem to be so accurate, and the knowledge of the alchemist's tricks so profound, that Tyrwhitt, one of the first great editors of Chaucer, was obliged to believe the poet had himself been actually ensnared by them. This story, though weird and almost terrifying, has no objectionable features in it. The best of them, though they are all three excellent, in Chaucer's most effective style, is that which was told by the Nun's Priest, a merry, laughter-provoking country story, full of delightful humour, and perfectly innocent and sweet. He describes a rustic household, a cottage rather than a farm, kept by a poor old woman and her two daughters, who possessed three large sows, but no more; three kine; and one sheep. She lived very sparingly:

"No wine she drank, neither of white nor red;
Her board was served most with white and black—
Milk and brown bread—of which she found no lack;
Singed bacon, and sometimes an egg or tweye;
For she was, as it were, a maner deye.
A yard she had, enclosed all about,
By sticks within, and a dry ditch without;
In which she had a cock, called Chanticleer,
Not, in the land of crowing, was his peer.
Much surer was his crowing in his lodge,
Than is a clock, or abbey horologe.
By nature knew he each ascension
Of the equinoctial in that town;
For when fifteen degrees had been ascended,
Then crew he, that it might not be amended.
His comb was redder than the fine coral,
Embattled, as it were a castle wall;
His bill was black, and like the jet it shone;
Like azure were his leggès and his toon;
His claws were whiter than the lily flower,
And like the burnèd gold was his colour."

Tweye, two.
A maner, some sort of a.
Deye, dairy-maid.
His legges and his toon, his legs and toes.

Chanticleer, however, like many well-dressed people, was very vain, and could never resist the praise of either his fine coat or his beautiful crowing. He found some difficulty, however, in keeping his seven wives in order, but more

especially his favourite spouse, the lovely Dame Partlet. On one occasion he suffered from a horrible dream, when he fancied that a strange beast, like a dog, but much more savage, came into the yard and threatened his life. This vision so disturbed Chanticleer that he told it to his wife; but Dame Partlet listened with impatience, and declared that the dream only arose from his having too much choler and heat of imagination.

Chaucer then writes one of his most famous scenes. With the gravest humour, and with overflowing fun, he relates the argument which followed between Chanticleer and the hen. Dame Partlet calls upon Cato as an authority for her position. Let Chanticleer reasonably take some medicine, and he will be free from both heat and choler. Chanticleer sarcastically thanks her for her learning, but proceeds to overwhelm it by quoting from Cicero. He tells her gloomy tales of Saint Kenelm of Mercia, of Pharaoh, of Crœsus, and of Andromache; and Dame Partlet having been reduced to order, Chanticleer takes his wives for a peck in the yard, and behaves himself in a right royal manner.

This cheerful conduct continuing for some considerable time, Chanticleer was almost overwhelmed with his own importance. One bright sunny day he marched with all his wives about the yard, defying the world. Suddenly as the shades of evening fell, and Chanticleer was giving his last crows in the sun, he became aware that a big fox had feloniously broken in the hedge, and was then lying, only half concealed, among a bed of herbs.

"This Chanticleer, when he him 'gan espy,
He would have fled, but that the fox anon
Cried 'Gentle sir, alas! where would ye gon?
Be ye afraid of me, that am your friend?
Now, truly, I were worse than any fiend,
If I to you wished harm or villany.
I am not come your secrets to espy—
But, honestly, the cause of my coming,
Was only for to hearken how you sing.
Truly to you as sweet a voice is given
As any angel hath that is in Heaven;
Besides, you have in music more feeling
Than had Boece, or any that can sing.
My lord your father—God his spirit bless!
Your mother, too, with all her gentleness,
Have both in my house been, to my great ease;
And now, good sir, full fain would I you please.
And say, save you, I ne'er heard any sing,
As did your father in the morwening.

Boece, a reference to Boethius, and his treatise *On Music*.
Morwening, morning.

It was from out his heart, all that he sung,
And for to make his voice the more strong,
He would so pain himself, that with each eye,
He had to wink, so loud he made his cry,
And stood upon his tiptoes therewithal
And stretchèd out his neck, so long and small; . . .
Nor sing you, sir, for holy charity;
Let's see, can you your father counterfeit?'

"This Chanticleer his wings began to beat,
As one that could his treason not espy,
So was he ravished with his flattery.
Then Chanticleer stood high upon his toes
Stretching his neck, and made his eyes to close,
And 'gan to crow so loudly for the nones;
And Dan Russell, the fox, jumped up at once,
And by the throat he seized on Chanticleer,
And on his back toward the wood him bare.
For there was yet no man that him pursued.
O destiny! that may not be eschewed!"

For the nones, for the occasion.
Dan Russell. Dan, signifying lord, was a title generally given to monks, and was also often prefixed to other names. Russell, which signifies red, refers to the colour of the fox.
Eschewed, avoided.

Then came a great lamentation in the hen-yard. The hens cackled and screamed with distress, and disturbed the simple widow and her daughters two. They just caught sight of the fox escaping to the wood, with Chanticleer upon his back, and with cries of "Harrow and Weylawey! ha! ha! the fox," they ran after him, as did many other men with their staves. Then Colle the dog ran too; Malkyn the maid with her distaff in her hand; the cow and the calf ran; and the very hogs, for they were scared by the barking of the dogs and the shouting of the men and women, so that they ran till they almost broke their hearts. The ducks screamed, thinking the men wanted to kill them; the geese in their terror flew over the trees. The farm men from near-by brought trumpets of brass, and of box, and of horn, and of bone, and blew into them; and with all this they shrieked and whooped. It seemed as if heaven itself would fall.

"Behold! how Fortune turneth suddenly
The hope and pride eke of her enemy!
This cock, that lay upon this fox's back
In all his dread, unto the fox he spake,
And said, 'Dear sir, if that I were as ye,
Then would I say so truly God help me,
Turn you again, you haughty fellows all,
A very pestilence upon you fall.

Harrow, help. **Weylawey**, alas! a cry of distress.

Now I am come into this forest side,
Despite your heed, the cock shall here abide;
I will him eat, in faith, and that anon.'
The fox replied, 'In faith, it shall be done.'
But as he spake that word, all suddenly,
The cock slipped from his mouth delyverly;
And high up on a tree he flew anon—
And when the fox saw that he was y-gon,
'Alas,' quoth he, 'O Chanticleer, alas!
I have to you,' he cried 'done great trespàss,
By frightening you, and making you afraid,
When I you seized, and brought you from the yard.
But, sir, I did it with no base intent;
Come down, and I will tell you what I meant.
I shall speak truth to you—God help me so.'
'Nay,' said the cock, 'I curse myself and you,
But first I curse myself, both blood and bones,
If you beguile me oftener than once.
Thou shalt no more, through any flattery,
Cause me to sing, and winken with mine eye;
For he that winketh when that he should see,
All wilfully, God let him, never thee.'
'Nay,' said the fox, 'but God give him mischance,
That is so indiscreet of governance,
To jangle when that he should hold his peace.'"

Delyverly, most adroitly.

The Nun's Priest concludes with a very effective little oration.

"'Lo! what it is to be so reckless
And negligent, and trust in flatterie,
But ye who hold this tale a mockerie
As of a fox, or of a cock or hen,
Take the morality thereof, good men.
For Saint Paul sayeth, all that written is
For our doctrine, it written is, y-wis.
Take thou the fruit, and let the chaff be still.
'And now, good God, if that it be Thy will,
As saith my lord, so make us all good men,
And bring us to Thy heav'nly bliss. Amen.'"

Doctrine, teaching. **Y-wis**, truly, indeed.

Another class of people, the well-to-do trades folk, show in their speech and thought a curious mixture of vulgarity and refinement. These people are represented by the Manciple, the Shipman, the Merchant, and the Wife of Bath. They are all shrewd, cunning citizens of the world, keen to make money by any means. The Wife of Bath falls into their usual mistake of thinking that none but rich people are gentlefolk. She further does not realize that people may be kind and honest and true-hearted, may, in fact, possess every virtue, and yet may belong to any other section of the community than the gentry. Under

such misapprehensions she is necessarily always astray. The Prioress probably avoided her during the whole of the journey; and the Wife of Bath, as probably, would never understand why.

The Wife of Bath begins with a very long Prologue, in which she unconsciously reveals all the depth and all the weakness of her nature. By instinct acute, and observant, she still falls into the error of imagining that everybody is alike; and that no one is worth anything unless they think exactly as she does. She cannot help showing herself to be a kind and warm-hearted woman; but spoils the good impression she might make by her judgments on others of whose nature she could know nothing. At last she comes to her story, a wild tale of the days of King Arthur, described with most un-Arthur-like surroundings. She tells of a certain knight who had so grievously offended Arthur, by reason of his bad behaviour to a young lady of the court, that the king was forced to condemn him to execution. From this fate the queen managed to save him, by begging his life from her husband, who most unwillingly granted her request. The queen then told the knight that she would protect him for a year only; and he was to spend the time in travelling through the world, and finding out the greatest secret in existence—the answer to this question, "What is it that women most desire?" The knight, in despair, accepted these terms, and set off on his year's journey, only to realize that he had gone on a hopeless quest. The days, very soon, passed all too quickly by, and the knight knew at last that but a few hours remained to him before he would have to yield himself up. In the depth of his anguish, as he was making his journey to the court, he passed a group of ladies, four-and-twenty in number, who were dancing in the woods. They were all young and beautiful; and he drew near to them, hoping that in his dire need he might gain some help from them. Suddenly they every one vanished, he knew not where, and nobody was left except an old, old woman, the most repulsive he had ever seen.

She hobbled to the knight and demanded who he was, and what he wanted. He explained his position as briefly as possible; she replied as plainly, too.

> "'Plight me thy troth here in my hand,' quoth she,
> 'The next thing that I shall require of thee
> Thou shalt it do, if it be in thy might;
> And I will tell it you, ere it be night.'"

The knight instantly accepted her offer, and they started for the palace together. On their way the old woman signified that she wanted to whisper in his ear. The knight could not refuse; and from her, in a moment, he had learnt the great secret. Then, as

bold as could be, with all his fears overthrown, he marched into the palace; and sent word to the queen that he had come to give her the answer.

The queen quickly had her court called, and many a noble wife, and many a maid, and many a widow was assembled at it. The queen sat as justice; and presently the knight was bidden to appear. Silence was proclaimed, and the knight was asked

> "What thing that worldly women loved the best?
> This knight did not stand still, as doth a beast,
> But to this questiòn he quick answer'd,
> With manly voice, that all the Court it heard,
> 'My lady liege, in general,' said he,
> 'Women desire to have the sovereignty,
> As well over their husbands as their love,
> And for to be in mastery him above.
> This is your most desire, though me ye kill;
> Do as you list; I am here at your will.'"

The ladies could none of them contradict his reply. He had obtained knowledge of the great secret of their sex. All they could say was, that he had saved his life; he could go.

Then the old wife, whom the knight had seen sitting on the green, and who had told to him this precious secret, scrambled on to her feet, and crying out to the queen, exclaimed that she had given the knight the information, and demanded to be repaid with the reward he had promised her. This the court felt to be only just; and asked what the reward was.

> "The first thing that I would of him require,
> He would it do, if it lay in his might.
> Before this court then pray I thee, Sir Knight,'
> Quoth she, 'that thou wilt take me as thy wife.
> For well thou know'st, that I have saved thy life.'"

The knight was so horrified at the proposal of this dirty, dreadful looking old woman, that he did all he could to get away from his bargain. The court, however, was obdurate in its judgment, and the old woman was still more so. To save his life, therefore, he wedded her on the following morning; and hid himself from everybody's sight for the whole of the day, because he was perfectly ashamed that anyone should see him.

At the end of the day the old woman insisted upon having a long talk with him. She scolded him soundly for having been rude and contemptuous to women, and for having treated them with no really kind feeling.

She showed him how mean it was of a man not to marry a girl because she was poor; and how base to throw her over, when she had given her heart to him. The knight at last began to

see himself in a new aspect; and the old woman seemed suddenly to become less stern.

"'Choose now,' quoth she, 'on one of these things twey
To have me, old and ugly till I dey,
And be to you a true and humble wife,
And never to displease you all my life;
Or else will you accept me young and fair,
And take your chance?'"

Twey, two. **Dey**, die.

The knight thought for a long time, and felt very uneasy as to his decision. At last he made up his mind, and said:

"'My lady and my love, and wife so dear,
I put me into your wise governance,
Choose for yourself which may be most pleasance
And most honour to you and me also,
I do not force the whether of the two;
For as you liketh, it sufficeth me.'

"'Then I have got the mastery,' quoth she,
'Since I may choose and govern as me lest?'
'Yes, truly, wife,' quoth he, 'I think it best.'
'Kiss me,' she said, 'we be no longer wroth,
For, by my truth, I will be to you both,
That is to say, to you both fair and good.
I will be fair to-morrow, to be seen,
As any lady, empress, or great queen
That is between the East and eke the West.
Do with my life and death as you may lest.
Cast up the curtain, look how that it is.'"

Pleasance, pleasure. **Me lest**, it pleases me.

Bewildered with excitement he drew up the curtain; and found that in the dark, she had pulled off all her disguise; and was young and fair. Above all things, she was the same damsel whom before he had treated so badly, while she was loving and devoted to him all the time.

"And when the knight saw verily all this,
That she so lovely was, and young thereto,
For joy he seized her in his armès two;
His heart all bathèd in a bath of bliss;
A thousand times a-row he did her kiss;
And she obeyèd him in everything
That might give him pleasance, or eke liking.
And thus they lived unto their livès' end
In perfect joy."

A-row, one after another.

The Shipman's Story is of a merchant of St. Denis who was badly treated by a cousin, a monk called Dan John, to whom he had showed much kindness. The Merchant's Story is of an old

man who married a young wife, to whom the neighbours gave the nicknames of January and May.

The last story to be considered is far more satisfactory than many of the others. As the cavalcade was nearing Canterbury it was overtaken by two strange men on horseback, who came up as if they had been riding for several miles at speed. Their horses were covered with foam, and they were both breathless and fatigued. They joined the pilgrims, and the first man gave them a courteous greeting. He was dressed in an extraordinary fashion, with a double leather wallet on his crupper. His cloak was sewn to his hood, and his hat hung down at his back by a cord. On his head he had laid a burdock-leaf to keep down the perspiration.

He greeted them all effusively, saying he had ridden hard to overtake them, because he wished to ride in such a company.

His servant, or yeoman, was even more conversational. He broke in with:

"'Sirs, now in the morning tide,
Out of your hostelry I saw you ride,
And warnèd here my lord, and sovereign,
Who that to riden with you is full fain
For his amusement, gossip him delights.'"

The Host then asked the Yeoman if his master could tell a good story.

"'Who, sir? my lord? Yea, yea, without a lie
He knows of mirth, and eke of jollity; . . .
As homely as he rides among you now,
If ye him knew, it would be for your prowe;
You would not then forego his acquaintance
For any good; I dare lay in balance
All that I have in my possession.
He is a man of high discretion,
I warn you well, he is a passing man.'
'Well,' quoth our Host, 'I pray thee, tell me then,
Is he a clerk or none? say what he is.'
'Nay, he is a greater than a clerk, y-wis,'
Answered this Yeoman, 'and in words a few,
Host, of his craft, somewhat I will show you.
I say, my lord knows so much subtlety—
Though all his craft ye may not learn from me,
And yet I somewhat help in his working—
That all this ground on which we are riding
Until we come to Canterbury town,
He could all cleanly turn it upside down,
And pave it all with silver and with gold.'

"And when this Yeoman had this story told
To our Host, '*Benedicite*,' cried he,
'This thing is wondrous marvellous to me,
Since that thy lord is of such high prudence,

Prowe, gain. Passing, extraordinary.

By cause of which men should him reverence,
That of his dignity recketh he so light—
His upper garment is not worth a mite,
By the effect on him, so must I go!
It is all dirty and all tattered so.
Why is thy lord so sluttish, I thee pray,
Since he is able better cloth to buy—
If that his deed accordeth with thy speech?
Tell me now that, and that I thee beseech.'"

Go, think; conclude.

Then the Yeoman's tongue began to loosen still more, and he gave a vivid description of the hovel where his master lived, and of the dangers and disagreeables of the work that was carried on there. Finally it came out that they were alchemists who professed to turn one pound of gold into two.

"'Yet it is false; but always we have hope
It for to do; and after it we grope.'"

While the Yeoman was talking thus freely, the Canon heard what he said, for the master was ever suspicious of his servant's speech. Like the guilty man described by Cato, he thought, if he saw any people talking together, that they were speaking about him. For this reason, he came up close to his Yeoman, and presently he cried out:

"'Hold thou thy peace; and speak not any more;
For if thou do, thou shalt it dear abye,
Thou slanderest me, here in this company,
And eke discoverest what thou shouldest hide.'
'Yea,' quoth our Host, 'tell on what may betide;
Of all his threatening do not reck a mite.'
'In faith,' quoth he, 'no more I do but lyte.'
And when the Canon saw what it would be,
And that his man would tell his privity,
He fled away in sorrow and in shame."

Abye, atone for. Privity, private affairs.

The Yeoman shouted for joy. "Now," he cried, "I can tell all I know. Would that my wit were strong enough to show all that belongs to the art of alchemy; I will tell you, however, such as I know. Now that my lord has gone, I will not spare such things as I do know, I will declare." With that, he started off into a long account of his experiences as assistant to the Canon; and related a wonderful story of a fraudulent alchemist who robbed a poor priest of all his little possessions.

When the Yeoman's story was done, the pilgrims found themselves climbing the slope of Blean Hill, not far from Canterbury, and the first part of their journey was virtually accomplished. Chaucer never finished the poem as he originally intended.

There is no account given of the actual stay in Canterbury, or of the visit to Thomas Becket's shrine ; nor was anything concerning the return to London written at all.

20. Poetry of Chaucer's last years. His place in literature.

Of the poetry that Chaucer wrote after the production of the *Canterbury Tales* there is not much to be said. The pieces are short and of a miscellaneous kind. The *Former Age* gives an agreeable description of the Golden Age, and the *Balades de Visage sans Peinture*, addressed to the friend with the unpainted face, *i.e.*, to the friend who is faithful in adversity, are touching and quaint. Three other ballads entitled *Truth*, *Gentilnesse*, and *Lak of Stedfastnesse*, all based on Boethius, are more serious than much Chaucer wrote elsewhere. The last-named ends with the famous Envoy addressed to Richard the Second, and was probably written in May, 1389. This was the time when Richard declared that he was old enough to rule by himself, and his action was welcomed as a relief after the harshness of the merciless parliament during the previous year. Chaucer's words to the king were strong and vigorous :

> " O prince, desire to be honourable,
> Cherish thy folk and hate extortion ;
> Suffer no thing that is reprovable
> To thy estate, be done in thy regioun.
> Show forth the rod of castigation,
> Dread God, do law, love truth and worthiness,
> And wed thy folk again to steadfastness."

Regioun, realm, kingdom.

The last set of Chaucer's verses has a touching interest attached to it. Quite at the end of his days, when he was old and poor, he appealed to Henry the Fourth, the son of his former patron, John of Gaunt. The appeal was in the effective form of a *Compleynt to his Empty Purse*, and Henry gave to his father's old friend the additional pension which soothed his last days.

With the exception of one or two famous instances it is almost impossible to allot relative honour in the world of letters. Shakspere is regarded, and rightly, as the greatest poet of the English race, while Milton has been given a place to himself. By reason of their different methods, a comparison between him and Shakspere is impossible.

Chaucer stands nearer to Shakspere than any other except Milton, yet far below him. Chaucer acquired a finished knowledge of men as he met them ; Shakspere had a profound insight into the whole of human nature. Chaucer read very acutely the people with whom he came into contact ; Shak-

spere intuitively knew every emotion of the human heart. Chaucer could not realise either passion or deep sorrow, and tragedy lay beyond his power. He has not Shakspere's gift of expressing a great thought in the only words that can express it, yet the constant beauty of his language is marvellous. It is always pure and transparent, and he surpasses every one of his fellow poets in the art of telling a story. His inexhaustible humour is never wearisome, because it is always fresh and true. It is not, moreover, the merriment of mere laughter, but the sweet and genial humour that sympathises with the incongruities of life.

VII. THE PERIOD FROM CHAUCER TO SPENSER.

21. English Prose from 1400 to 1500.

A century and a half elapsed between the death of Chaucer and the birth of Spenser, for the greater part of which time literature lay dormant in England, and the work done at the end of the fourteenth century seemed to have been absolutely thrown away. The chief cause of this interruption was the disquiet from which England suffered during the whole of the fifteenth century. She was not only at war for sixty-five years out of the hundred; first with France; and then with herself, in the sanguinary Wars of the Roses; she was involved as well in ceaseless social disputes, which harmed her more than any foreign affairs. The condition of things in England, which had lasted for many generations, was coming rapidly to a close. The old social system was being superseded by a new one; the beginnings of modern times were springing up on the ruins of the Middle Ages. A stir was made by the people to bring about a change in their methods of life, and this movement was largely abetted from a very dangerous quarter.

A considerable body had arisen in England, the members of which were known by the name of Lollards. Those to whom the term was applied called themselves followers of Wiclif. He died sixteen years before the beginning of the century, and during his life had set in motion an impulse which did not reach its height until many years after. The social doctrines advocated by the Lollards of the fifteenth century were, however, quite unjustified by any of Wiclif's teaching. Lollardry had been one of the principal causes of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, when the actions of the Lollards had proved that their society was as much a political as a religious one. The rising of the villeins showed what their movements would have become had they been left unchecked, although it was not until twenty years afterwards that stringent repression became necessary. The

Lollards often became dangerous because they were abetted by minds more astute than their own.

A controversy between the church and the Lollards had a considerable effect upon English literature. An English bishop—Reginald Pecock, who held successively the sees of St. Asaph and Chichester—took up his pen in the cause of the quarrel, but only made for himself enemies on both sides. Pecock was not a champion after the church's heart. His *Repressor of over-much Blaming of the Clergy*, although aimed directly at the Lollard heresies, denied a right to demand unenquiring faith in the dogmas of the church. So far as the Lollards were concerned, he was avowedly their enemy, albeit an enemy whose one aim was to be just; but, in the eyes of the clergy, a partisan who rested his arguments on logic instead of infallibility, was almost as criminal as the recalcitrants themselves. Although the *Repressor* met with much opposition, its influence was none the less powerful. It was published in 1449; and in 1450, the year of Cade's rebellion, the idea of Lollardism appears to have died out, for no mention was then made by the insurgents of any religious grievances at all.

The *Repressor* is of great interest as a piece of natural fifteenth century English, and as one of the best specimens of our early prose. It is less archaic even than Mandeville. Were it not for the balanced sentences, in which it so remarkably anticipates Hooker, it might almost pass for a work of the present century. It is the first book on a theological subject which was written in the English language.

Pecock's work marked the disturbing effect of socialistic influences. In a similar manner Sir John Fortescue's *Difference between Absolute and Limited Monarchy* dealt with the constitutional aspects of the Wars of the Roses. These wars lasted from 1450 to 1485, a series of struggles between two great branches of the Plantagenet family. On the one side, the Lancastrians, descendants of John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, were supporters of kings who relied upon the advice and friendship of their parliaments; on the other side, the Yorkists, descendants of the Duke of York, upheld the doctrine of kingly power being hereditary, and insisted on the supremacy of the will of the crown.

Fortescue, a strong Lancastrian, was tutor to the unfortunate son of Henry the Sixth; and, on the accession of Edward the Fourth, was attainted of high treason by that king's first parliament. He fled for his life, and accompanied Queen Margaret to France when she went into exile in 1463. The queen, the young prince, and Fortescue were then "all in grete poverte" together. Ten years later, times had changed. The Lancastrians had

tried a constitutional experiment, and it failed. The Yorkists triumphed completely; the claims of hereditary kinship, worked by skilful hands, proved stronger than sixty years of a parliamentary title. Fortescue bowed to the inevitable. He made his peace with Edward the Fourth, and his attainder of high treason was reversed.

The only prose book of perfectly pure literature to be found in the fifteenth century is Sir Thomas Malory's *La Morte d'Arthur*. This is a wonderful collection and combination of the legends centring round the British king. For three centuries and a half the tales of Arthur had not been dealt with, though a great number of ballads and little songs, sung by the Jongleurs, were constantly composed during the time. In the absence of any definite writing, the verses thus strung together took the place of literature among the masses of the people. The men of each particular class or occupation had their own ballads and songs, while the tendency of the others was to make their verses cluster round some famous name. In no case, however, had an attempt been made to weld the ballads dealing with the same subject into a great poem or a continuous book until Malory, in 1469 or 1470, accomplished this task with the legends of Arthur. Of the personality of Malory nothing is known. There is still extant a pardon given by Edward the Fourth, in the eighth year of his reign, to one *Thomas Malorie, Miles*; whether this was the author of *La Morte d'Arthur* it is impossible to say. Whoever he may have been, or whatever his fate, he has left behind him a piece of work for which England cannot be too grateful.

Malory had ample sources of supply to draw from, and made good use of them all. When he wrote, the romances of Arthur had fallen into three different groups—the first dealing with Merlin and Arthur's early history; the second with Lancelot, the Quest of the Grail, and the death of Arthur; and the third with the story of Tristram. Malory aimed at combining these various streams into one consistent and continuous whole. Caxton, the printer, entertained the most favourable opinion of the result. The object of the book, he declared, was to "beware that we fall not to vice nor sin, but follow virtue." Ascham, the private tutor of Lady Jane Grey, held the opposite view. "What toys the daily reading of such a book may work in the will of a young gentleman or a young maid that liveth wealthily and idly, wise men can judge, and honest men do pity." Modern criticism has been more reasonable than Ascham; and recognises that Malory regarded his task as the serious working out of a tragedy, and of the punishment that awaits even an unconscious sin.

The dialect in which *La Morte d'Arthur* is written marks very clearly the rapidity of the transition between the Middle and the Modern English. The language of Chaucer is often difficult to read without assistance; but English changed so quickly during the seventy years after his death that, for *La Morte d'Arthur*, the help of a glossary is scarcely required.

The tenderness and sincerity of Malory almost attain to eloquence. He takes his readers out of the touches of the every-day world to the dim times of "faerie" that lay like a mist over the beginnings of England. Even now *La Morte d'Arthur* bears in it a breath of new life. In the fifteenth century it must have been doubly precious, for men were able in those days to believe that it was true. After their long experience of wavering kings, of perjured nobles, of ambitious princes, the pure soul of Arthur seemed to be an ideal towards which all should strive. Even Lancelot's treachery, expiated as it was by long years of remorse, is bright as a star in heaven when compared with the faithlessness of Red Rose to White, of White Rose to Red.

The following passage describes how the Holy Grail was found by Sir Lancelot:

"Thenne he enforced hym mykel to undoo the doore, thenne he lystned and herd a voyce whiche sange so swetely that it semed none erthely thynge, and him thoughte the voyce said, Joye and honour be to the fader of heven. Thenne Launcelot kneled doun to fore the chamber, for wel wyst he that there was the Sancgreal within that chamber. Then sayde he, Fair swete fader Jhesu Cryst yf ever I did thing that plesed the lord, for thy pyte have me not in despyte for my synnes done afore tyme, and that thou shewe me some thynge of that I seke. And with that he saw the chamber dore open, and there came out a grete clerenes, that the hows was as bright as all the torches of the world had ben there. So cam he to the chamber dore, and wold have entryd. And anon a voyce said to him, Flee, Launcelot, and enter not, for thou oughtest not to doo hit. And yf thou entre, thou shalt forthynke hit. Then he withdrewe hym abak ryght hevy. Then looked he up the myddes of the chamber, and sawe a table of sylver, and the holy vessel covered with reed samyte, and many angels aboute hit, whereof one helde a candel of wax brennyng, and the other helde a crosse and the

Mykel, much.
Lystned, listened.
None, no.
Fader, father.
To fore, before.
Wyst, knew.
Pyte, pity.
Have me not in despyte, do not condemn me; have me not in contempt.
Afore tyme, in days gone by.
Seke, seek.
Grete clerenes, great clearness, *i.e.* a bright light.
Hows, house.
Hit, it.
Forthynk, repent.
Ryght hevy, right heavy, *i.e.* very mournful.
Myddes, midst, the centre.
Reed samyte, red samite.
Brennyng, burning.

ornamentys of an aulter. And before the holy vessel he sawe a good man clothed as a preest. And it semed that hee was at the sacrynge of the masse. And it semed to Launcelot that above the preeste's hands were thre men wherof the two putte the yongest by lykenes bitwene the preeste's handes, and so he lyfte hit up ryghte hyhe, and it semed to shewe so to the peple. And thenne launcelot marvelled not a lytel. From him thougt the preest was so gretely charged of the fygure that him semed that him sholde falle to the erthe. And whan he saw none about him that wolde helpe him, Thenne came he to the dore and sayde Faire Fader Jhesu Cryst ne take hit for no synne though I helpe the good man which hath grete nede of help. Ryghte soo entred he in to the chamber and cam toward the table of sylver, and whanne he cam nyghe he felte a brethe that hym thoughte hit was entremedled with fyre, which smote him so sore in the vysage that him thoughte it brente his vysage, and there with he felle to the erthe and had no power to aryse, as he that was so araged that had lost the power of his body and of his herynge and seynge."

Sacrynge of the masse, consecrating of the mass.
By lykenes, by appearance.
Enforced him myckel, tried very much.
So greatly charged of, so weighed down by.
Ne take it for no synne, do not regard it as a sin.
Ryghte soo, right so; immediately.
Brethe, breath.
Entremedled, intermingled.
Brent, burnt.
Araged, enraged.
Herynge and seynge, hearing and seeing.

A few words must be added on a book which for long was thought to have been written in the thirteenth century. It is now regarded as belonging, in its original French compilation, to the fourteenth, and in the first English version to the fifteenth. It is also declared that none of its forms, as we have them, can be from the same hand which wrote the original work. This book is the *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, purporting to be an account of the author's actual adventures in the Holy Land and the Far East. We have now to relinquish our belief even in the personality of Mandeville. The portion relating to the Holy Land is possibly the work of one who had been there. The rest of the volume is bookmaking of the crudest and most shameless kind.

There remains, however, much charm in it that nothing can take away. The style is clear, flexible, and lively. The intermixture of the wildest tales, with shrewd accounts of what the compiler, or some other person, actually saw, give the volume a fascination which is all its own. It has stories of the Pissemyres, who guarded the Hills of Gold, and of people of "a cursed nature," who have no heads. It tells us also of the Devil in the Perilous Valley, and of the "wyse men beyond," to whom Paradise was familiar: "Of Paradys ne can not I speken propurly, for I was not there. It is fer beyonde; and, for-

Forthinketh me, I am sorry, it makes me repent.

thinketh me! that also I was not werthi. But as I have herd seye of wyse men beyonde, I schall tell you with gode wille."

The English version of this book was most popular and widely read. Its language shows at times some trace of Southern forms, though the bulk of it is distinctly Midland. A good example of the workmanship to be found in it is the explanation of new French words: "Tribe, that is to seye, kynrede." Such and so popular a book did much to familiarise the nation with the new standard tongue.

Another work seems to belong to the fifteenth century, which is of almost equal interest to Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*. This is the *Revelation of the Monk of Evesham*, one of the earliest attempts at religious allegory in our language. The first version known is incorporated by Roger of Wendover in his *Flowers of History*; the original having been written in Latin about 1196. The English version of 1842 was printed by William of Mechlin, the partner of John Lettou, who set up the first printing press in London. Their books were nearly all Latin works; but when their partnership was dissolved, Mechlin set up a press by himself, and brought out the *Revelation*. The volume so printed must be either a translation of a full Latin manuscript, which had been preserved, or an expansion into English from the abbreviated version inserted by Roger of Wendover in his *Flowers of History*.

The conception, which forms the basis of the book, was by no means an uncommon one in the Middle Ages. Bede has preserved for us the legend of Drithelm's visit to Purgatory in 696; Roger of Wendover gives those of Charles the Great and the Knight Owen; and Dante's *Commedia* was probably written at about the same time as the *Revelation*. Such a subject appealed especially to the mediæval mind, for it struck the keynote of the Christianity of the Middle Ages, "Everlasting Justice, yet with Penitence, and Everlasting Pity."

The concluding chapters of the *Revelation* have much beauty. The crystal wall of Heaven; the clear shining light, "which dullyd not a mannys syghte, but rather scharped hyt"; the joy of the souls who gained admission; the sweet peal and melody of bells—all are devised and described with a genuinely poetic pen. The English version of the *Revelation* cannot have been made for many years before the date of its publication. It is the English of the fifteenth century, and not of the twelfth, with a great mixture of French and Latin words thoroughly established in the language. The author's style is straight forward and to the point, not unworthy of the great subject he attempted.

22. The Poets of the Fifteenth Century.

Apart from these volumes of prose, the work of the century may be summed up in a few words. Thomas Occleve, in the reign of Henry the Fifth, was a poor versifier himself, but an ardent admirer of Chaucer. The following lines from the poem concerning the government of wise princes are part of the celebrated outburst in praise of Chaucer, and show plainly the feeling that Occleve had for him :

" O maister dere and fader reverent,
My maister Chaucer, floure of eloquence,
Mirrour of fructuous entendement;
O universal fadir in science,
Allas! that thou thyne excellent prudence
In thy bedde mortel myghtest not bequethè,
What eylèd Dethe? allas, why wold he sle the?

" O Dethe, that didest not harmë singulere
In slaughtre of hym, but alle this lond it smerteth;
But natheles yit hast thou no powere
His name to slee; his hye vertu asterteth
Unslayne fro the, which ay us lyfly herteth
With bookës of his ornat endityng,
That is to alle this londe enlumynyng. . . .

" My dere maister—God his soulë quyte—
And fader, Chaucer, fayne wold have me taught,
But I was dull, and lerned lyte or naught.
Allas! my worthy maister honorable,
This londës verray tresor and richesse,
Dethe by thy dethe hath harm irreperable
Unto us done; hir vengeable duresse
Dispoiled hath this londe. . . .
O maystir, maystir, God thy soulè reste."

Fructuous, fruitful.
Entendement, understanding.
Bequethe, here in the sense of inherit.
Eyled, ailed.
Sle the, slay thee.
Smerteth, smarted, suffered.
Asterteth, started aside.
Herteth, encourages.
Hir, his.
Vengeable duresse, severity full of vengeance.
Didest not harme singulere, death did not hurt one person, but all the nation.

John Lydgate, a better writer, though little more than a third-rate poet, lived in the reign of Henry the Sixth. He also loved Chaucer; his own powers lying rather in the direction of humorous verse than of real poetry. The short extract here given from the *London Lickpenny* shows his capacity for this kind of writing. Of his longer works—*The Story of Thebes*, *The Troy Brooke*, and *The Falls of Princes*—the last is decidedly the best. He has used in it the seven-line stanza so largely employed by Chaucer, and he has taken great care over his versification.

Lydgate's London Lickpenny.

"Then unto London I dyd me hye,
Of all the land it beareth the pryse;
'Hot pescodes,' one began to crye,
'Strabery rype, and cherryes in the ryse.'
One bad me come nere, and by some spyce,
Pepper and safforne they gan me bede.
But for lack of money I myght not spede.

"Then to the Chepe I began me drawne,
Where mutch people I saw for to stand;
One ofred me velvet, sylke, and lawne,
An other he taketh me by the hande,
'Here is Parys thred, the finest in the land.'
I never used to such thyngs indede,
And wanting money, I might not spede.

"Then went I forth by London stone,
Thoroughout all Canwyke streete;
Drapers mutch cloth me offred anone;
Then comes me one, cryed 'Hot shepes feete,'
One cryde 'makerell,' 'ryshes grene,' an other gan greete
One bad me by a hood to cover my head,
But for want of money I myght not be sped."

In the ryse, on the twig.
By, buy.
Gan me bede, began to offer me.
Spede, succeed, get on.
Anone, straightway, at once.
Ryshes, rushes.
Greete, to weep.

In the absence of actual poetical works, songs and ballads satisfied the bulk of the people, and a genuine taste and liking for literature slowly rose, though comparatively nothing to speak of was done in the way of native production. Several new influences began to creep in; and the rapid variations in the language, which implied an increase of vocabulary rather than a change in inflection, provided a more copious medium for thought and speech. It was easier, in the fifteenth century, to express ideas in words, than it would have been in the days before Chaucer.

Ever since the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the scholars of that city had been scattered over Europe, and had given many translations of the Greek classics to the western nations; while in England a large number of others from the Latin had been read in French.

A revived interest in Italian affairs also arose in England at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Many Englishmen went over to Italy to study Greek authors, on whom the best scholars were lecturing in Florence, and translated a great number of these books when they returned home. Although next to nothing was done in original English work, England became fit to enjoy the fruit of Caxton's labours. His publica-

tions, begun in 1474, were extremely well-chosen, because he did not confine himself exclusively to the reprint of the ancient classics. He gave as much attention to reproducing the works of the Old English writers. He took especial pains with the texts of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate; and printed Layamon's version of *Brut*, and Higden's *Polychronicon*. Ralph Higden, a Benedictine monk at Chester, wrote the latter book, a history of the world, at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Caxton also translated the *Golden Legend*, and published Malory's great work on Arthur. This copious issue from Caxton's press helped to feed the imagination of the new readers. The poets who began to write after Caxton's books appeared modelled themselves on Chaucer and his contemporaries, so that the Old English verse was saved from forgetfulness, and a good taste and a sound common sense were inculcated in the younger English writers.

23. The Beginning of the Sixteenth Century—Roger Ascham, Sir Thomas More, Bishop Latimer, Stephen Hawes, and John Skelton.

A marked difference is to be seen between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. The accession of Henry the Eighth in 1509 roused in the English nation an interest in books greater than it had felt for years. English scholars who had studied in Italy now taught Greek in Oxford, Cambridge, and London. Erasmus came over to England, and, aided by Sir Thomas More, began to expound a broad and wise theology. The Italian learning caused a revival of English prose, a movement which was strenuously supported by the young king. To Henry, Roger Ascham dedicated his first book in 1545, *Toxophilus, or the School of Shooting*, which was written for the pleasure of the gentlemen and yoemen of England in their own tongue. "Everything," writes Ascham, "has been done excellently in Greek and Latin, but in the English tongue so meanly that no man can do worse."

In his book he describes the manner of shooting in all the countries that he can think of, and illustrates his theories by a number of apt tales. Here is a typical passage taken from a page of Herodotus:

"The Scythians to be invincible by reason of their shotyng, the greate voyages of so manye noble conquerours spent in that countrie in vayne, doeth well prove: But specially that of Darius the myghtie kyng of Persia, which when he had taryed there a great space, and done no good, but forweryed his hoste with travayle and hunger: at last the men of Scythia sent an ambassadour with four gyftes—a byrde, a frogge, a

Taryed, tarried, stayed. **Forweryed**, worn out. **Hoste**, his army.

mouse, and five shaftes. Darius, mervayling at the straungenesse of the gyftes, asked the messenger what they signifyed: the messenger answered, that he had no further commaundement, but onely to deliver his gyftes, and retourne agayne with all spede; but I am sure, sayeth he, you Persians for your great wysdome, can soon boult out what they meane. When the messenger was gone, every man began to say his verdite. Darius' iudgment was this, that ye Scythians gave over into the Persians handes their lyves, their hole power, both by lande and see, signifyinge by the mouse the earthe, by the frogge the water, in which they both live, by the byrde theyre lyves which live in the ayer, by the shaft their hole power and empire, that was maynteyned always by shotinge. Gobryas, a noble and wyse captayne amonges the Persians, was of a cleane contrarye mind, saying, nay not so, but the Scythians mean thus by their gyftes, that except we get us wynges and flye into the ayer lyke birdes, or run into the holes of the earthe lyke myse, or els lye lurking in fennes and marisses lyke frogges, we shall never returne home agayne, before we be utterly undone with their shaftes; which sentence sank so sore into their hertes, yat Darius, with all spede possible, brake up his campe and gat hym selfe homewarde."

Mervayling, marvelled.
Spede, speed.
Boult out, sift out, discover.
Verdite, opinion.
Ayer, air.
Hole, whole.
Cleare contrary, exactly opposite.
Els, else.
Marisses, marshes.

Sir Thomas More finished in 1513 the *Historie of Edward the Fifth and Richard the Third*, but it was not printed till some forty years later. This was the best English prose book of the sixteenth century, and More used for it a style more dignified and stately than any that English had yet known. He had as well a great skill in bright and effective narrative. The accompanying passage from the *Historie of King Richard the Third* is the description of Hastings on the morning of the day of his death:

"A merueilouse case it is to here, either the warninges of that he shoulde have voided, or the tokens of that he could not voide. For the self night next before his death, the lord Standley sent a trustie secret messenger unto him at midnight in al the hast, requiring him to rise and ryde away with hym, for he was disposed utterly no lenger to bide; he had so fereful a dreme in which him thoughte that a bore with his tuskes so raced them both bi the heddes that the blood ranne aboute both their shoulders. And forasmuch as the protector gave the bore for his cognisaunce, this dreme made so fereful an impression in his hart, that he was truly determined no lenger to tary, but had his horse redy, if the lord Hastinges wold go with him to ride as far yet the same night, that thei shold be out of the danger ere dai. 'Ey, good lord,' quod the

Meruellouse, marvellous.
Here, hear.
Hast, haste.
Bide, waite.
Bore, boar.
Raced, razed, scraped.
Cognisaunce, the crest surmounting his helmet.
Quod, quoth, said.

lord Hastinges to his messenger, 'leneth my lord thy master to such trifles, and hath such faith in dremes, which either his own fere fantasieth or do rise in the nighte's rest by reason of his day thoughtes? Tel him it is plaine witchcraft to beleve in such dremes; which if they were tokens of things to come, why thinketh he not that we might be as likely to make them true by our going if we were caught and brought back (as frends fayle fleers), for then had the bore a cause to race us with his tuskes, as folk that fled for some falsehed, wherfore either is no peryl; nor none there is in dede; or if any be, it is rather in going than biding. And if we should fall in perill one way or other, yet had I lever that men should se it wer by other men's falsehed, then thinke it were either our owne faulte or faint hart. And therfor go to thy master, man, and commende me to him, and pray him be mery and have no fere: for I ensure him I am as sure of the man that he woteth of, as I am of my own hand.' 'God sende grace, sir,' quod the messenger, and went his way. . . . O good God, the blindness of our mortal nature, when he most feared, he was in good suerty; when he rekened him self surest, he lost his life, and that within two houres after."

Fantasieth, makes up out of a fancy.	**Lever**, rather.
Fleers, those who flee or run away.	**Suerty**, security, safety.

Bishop Hugh Latimer, whose *Sermon on the Ploughers* is typical of his character and beautiful heart, lightened his prose with a bright and kindly humour.

He had, however, a profound contempt for men who made money for money's sake. "Nowe, what shall we saye," he asks, "of these ryche citizens of London? What shall I saye of them? Shal I cal them proude men of London, malicious men of London, mercylesse men of London? No, no, I maie not saie so, they wil be offended wyth me then. Yet muste I speke. . . . Yes, I thynke so. Therfore I saye, repente, O London. Repente, repente. Thou heareste thy faults tolde the, amend them, amend them. . . . What a do there was made in London at a certein man because he sayd, and in dede at that time on a just cause, Burgesses, quoth he, nay, butterflies. Lorde what a to do there was for yat worde. And yet would God they were no worse then butterflies. Butterflies do but theyre nature, the butterfly is not covetouse, is not gredy of other men's goodes, is not full of envy and hatered, is not malicious, is not cruelle, is not mercilesse. The butterflye glorieth not in hyr owne dedes, nor preferreth the tradicions of men before God's word: it committeth not idolatry, nor worshippeth false goddes. But London cannot abye to be rebuked suche is the nature of man. If they be prycked, they will kycke. If they be rubbed on the gale, they will wince. But yet they wyll not amende theyr faultes, they wil not be yl spoken of."

The publication by Caxton of Chaucer's, Gower's, and Lydgate's works exercised, as has been already said, a profound

The gale, a wound in the skin.	**Yl**, Ill.

influence on the newer English poets. In the earlier years of the sixteenth century Stephen Hawes recast a poem known as the *Temple of Fame*, the work of an earlier writer; and declared that he took Chaucer and Lydgate as his models. He was not, however, wanting in originality; the principal fault of his work is its length and tedium. Occasionally he devises a charming couplet, and few know that to him the world is indebted for

> "Though the daye be never so long
> At length it ringeth to evensong."

Hawes' chief work is *La Belle Pucelle*, an allegorical poem of great length, offering a study of a perfect knight, one Graund Amoure, for a perfect love, the Beautiful Maid. The following is the description of *La Pucelle*:

> "And first of all, my hart gan to lerne
> Right well to register in remembraunce
> How that her beauty I might then decerne
> From toppe to toe endued with pleasaunce,
> Which I shall show withouten variaunce.
> Her shining heere so properly she dresses
> Aloft her forheade with fayre golden tresses;
> Her forheade stepe, with fayre browes ybent,
> Her eyen gray, her nose straight and fayre.
> In her white chekes the faire bloude it went
> As among the wite the redde to repayre;
> Her mouth right small, her breathe swete of ayre;
> Her lippes softe and ruddy as a rose;
> No hart alive but it woulde him appose.
>
> "With a little pitte in her well-favoured chynne,
> Her necke long, as white as any lillye,
> With vaynes blewe in which the bloude ranne in,
> Her bosom rounde, and thereto right pretye;
> Her armes slender, and of goodly bodye;
> Her fingers small, and therto right long,
> White as the milke, with blewe vaynes among.
>
> "Her fete proper, she gartred well her hose;
> I never saw so fine a creature;
> No thing she lacketh, as I no suppose,
> That is longyng to faire dame Nature.
> Yet more over her countenance so pure,
> So swete, so louely, wold any hart enspire
> With fervent love to attain his desire."

Bloude, blood. **Appose**, try.

John Skelton is the chief poet belonging to the reign of Henry the Seventh. He was born about 1460, and was educated at Cambridge. Two of his early poems were elegies—one on

Edward the Fourth, and the other on the Earl of Northumberland. In 1490 Caxton wrote of him in the highest terms, declaring that he had translated from the Latin, "not in rude and olde langage, but in polished and ornate termes craftely, as he that hath redde Vyrgyle, Ovyde, Tullye, and all the other noble poets and oratours, to me unknowen. And also he hath redde the nine muses, and understande theyr musicalle scyences, and to whom of them eche scyence is appropred. I suppose he hath dronken of Elycon's well."

Skelton at this time was Poet Laureate of the University of Oxford, and later on obtained the same honour at the Universities of Louvain and of Cambridge. He was in great favour with Henry the Seventh, and became tutor to the young Prince Henry, afterwards Henry the Eighth. When the prince was nine years old, Erasmus, then resident in England, congratulated him on being taught by Skelton; declaring that he was a special light and ornament of British letters, and a sure guide to the sacred sources of learning. Skelton, however, did not care for court life or court customs. In the later years of Henry the Seventh's reign he wrote a bitter satire against court vices and follies. This was called the *Bowge of Court*, from the French word *bouche* (the mouth), *bowge of court* being the technical phrase for the right to eat at the king's table. In spite of this exercise of his satirical powers, Skelton remained in Henry's favour for some years of the early part of the reign. At last he seems to have found it expedient to retire to the country, and he became the rector of Diss, a little town in Norfolk. Skelton and Wolsey, in earlier days, had been intimate friends, yet when Wolsey had attained to the height of his power, and was living luxuriously in the palace he had built at Hampton Court, Skelton turned against him, and pursued him with bitter satires on his pride. One of the most effective of these was the *Speke, Parrot*, in which a parrot was supposed to repeat all the talk he heard going on around him about Wolsey and the king. It was written in Chaucer's seven-lined stanza; and the satire was conveyed in a medley of sharp sayings, blended with scraps from the parrot's own remarks. Henry the Eighth and Wolsey are described as two dogs, Bo-ho and Hough-ho (Bow-wow and Wow-wow), and the Parrot remarks,

"Bo-ho doth bark well, but Hough-ho he ruleth the ring."

Another long satire of over 1200 lines, directed against Wolsey, was called *Why Come ye not to Court?* in which Skelton complained that all was wrong in the land, and that the nobles were

Appropred, appropriated or allotted. Elycon, Helicon.

extinguished under Wolsey's red hat. He ends with fierce lines of warning to Wolsey:

"He maketh so proud pretens
That in his equipolens
He jugyth him equivalent
With God omnipotent;
But yet beware the rod,
And the stroke of God."

Equipolens, equality of power.

Skelton's *Colin Clout* was intended to express his wrath at the condition of the poor in the country. The name blends in representation the two forms of working-men's life as understood in Tudor times. Colin, from *colonus*, a tiller of the soil, signifies a peasant, a rustic clown; Clout, which means patch, signifies a person of sedentary calling, and stands for the mechanic in a town. Colin Clout is the name that Spenser so admired, and afterwards adopted. This is the opening of Colin Clout's querulous complaint:

"I, Colin Cloute,
As I go aboute,
And wandryng as I walke
I heare the people talke;
Men say for sylver and golde
Miters are bought and sold;
There shall no clergy appose
A myter or a crosse
But a full purse.

"A straw for Goddes curse!
What are they the worse? . . .
What care they though Gill sweat
Or Jack of the Noke?
The pore people they yoke
With summons and citacions
And excommunications
About churches and market;
The bysshop on his carpet
At home full soft doth syt."

Appose, to place opposite or before.
Jack of the Noke, Jack of the oak tree.

In strong contrast to the body of the work, this curious poem of fault-finding ends in a prayer to Christ—

"Such grace that He us send
To rectify and amend
Things that are amiss
When that His pleasure is. Amen."

All these verses were written in "rude rayling rimes," in

order to catch the popular ear; but when Skelton put aside the extravagances of his hatred of Wolsey, and forgot his wild schemes for reform, he worked and thought like a scholar, and wrote in a refined and cultivated way. He was so admirable in his scholarship that Erasmus called him the "glory and light of English letters," and Caxton declared that he improved the English language. Some very pretty love lyrics written by him are still preserved, as well as another poem which he wrote on the occasion of a young lady losing her pet sparrow. Mistress Jane Scrope was being educated by the Black Nuns at Carow, near Norwich, where Philip, her dear bird, met with his death at the claws of the cat. The poem ended in a Latin epitaph to the bird and some very graceful lines in praise of its mistress. It is one of the brightest and most ingenious poems in the language; and in the writing of such pieces the pleasanter side of Skelton's nature is revealed.

The Tunnyng of Elinor Rummynge shows his skill in description, and his knowledge of the lower walks of life. In this picture of vulgar coarseness he gives evidence of power equal to that of Swift or Hogarth. Though he reaches Swift on the one side, he also touches Sackville on the other, forming an important link in the development of English literature. He stands alone between the imitators of Chaucer, of whom he was the last true disciple; and the rise of the new Italian influence due to Surrey and Wyatt.

He died in 1529, sheltered from the wrath of Wolsey by the sanctuary of Westminster, where the abbot, John Islip, befriended him.

24. The Scotch Poets, and the Revival of English Poetry—King James the First, Robert Henryson, William Dunbar, Sir David Lyndesay, The Earl of Surrey, and Sir Thomas Wyatt.

A few words must be added with regard to certain Scotch poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries who were all influenced by Chaucer in a greater or less degree. The earliest of these was James the First of Scotland. During his nineteen years' imprisonment in England he became acquainted with Chaucer's writings, and fell in love with a niece of Henry the Fourth. His poem, *The King's Quhair* (quire or book), is remarkable for its self-analysis. It was written in Chaucer's seven-lined stanza; and remained the best of its kind until the days of Spenser. King James naively tells the history of his passion from beginning to end. The experiences of Palamon

Tunnyng, the putting of liquor into casks or tuns.

and Arcite are recalled by his delight on first seeing the lady to whom his heart was given.

"And therewith kest I doun myn eye ageyne,
Quhare as I saw walkyng under the Toure,
Full secretely, new cumyn hir to pleyne,
The fairest or the freschest youngë floure
That ever I sawe, methought, before that houre,
For quhich sodayne abate, anon astert
The blude of all my body to my hert.

"And though I stood abaisit tho a lyte,
No wonder was; for quhy? my wittis all
Were so ouercome with plesance and delyte,
Only through latting of myn eyen fall,
That sudaynly my hert became hir thrall,
For ever of free wyll, for of manace
There was no takyn in hir suetë face.

"In hir was youth, beautee, with humble aport,
Bountee, richesse, and womanly faiture,
God better wote than my pen can report;
Wisdom, largesse, estate and conyng sure
In every point, so guydit hir mesure
In word, in dede, in schap, in contenance
That nature mycht no more hir childe avance."

Kest, cast.
Quhare, where.
Cumyn, coming.
Pleyne, to amuse herself.
Quhich, which.
Sodayne abate, sudden shock or surprise.
Astert, sent, started off.
Abaisit, abashed.
Tho, then.
Lyte, a little.
Quhy, why.
Thrall, slave.
Manace, pride.
Takyn, token.
Aport, manner, behaviour.
Wote, knows.
Conyng, understanding.
Avance, improve.

Robert Henryson, who died early in the sixteenth century, also followed Chaucer, continuing the *Troilus* in his *Testament of Cresseid*. As a specimen of charming domestic verse, the following stanzas are unrivalled. Henryson was about to begin working at the *Cresseid*, and it was winter. In spite of the cold,

"Within mine orature,
I stude, when Titan with his bemis bricht,
Withdrawin doun, and sylit undercure,
And fair Venus, the beauty of the nicht,
Uprais, and set into the west full richt
Hir golden face, in oppositioun
Of God Phœbus, direct discending doun.

"Throwout the glass hir bemis brast so fair
That I micht se on everie side me by.

Sylit undercure, hidden under-cover.
Throwout, through.
Brast, burst, penetrated.

The northin wind had purifyit the air,
And sched the misty cloudis fra the sky;
The frost freisit, the blastis bitterly
Fra Pole Artick came quhistling loud and schill,
And causit me remufe aganist my will.

"I mend the fire, and beikit me about,
Than tuik a drink my spreitis to comfort,
And armit me weill fra the cauld thairout;
To the winter nicht and mak it schort,
I tuik ane Quair, and left all uther sport,
Written be worthie Chaucer glorious,
Of fair Cresseid and lusty Troilus."

Sched, separated. Remufe, remove. Tuik, took.
Schill, shrill. Beikit, bustled. Quair, book.
Causit, made.

William Dunbar carried on the same influence in the sixteenth century, and was the first translator into English verse of any Latin book. His poem of the *Palace of Honour* shows the spirit of Chaucer very clearly, in the power that he exhibits as a story-teller, and in the rapidity and ease with which the tale is unfolded.

Here are some pretty little stanzas, from *The Thrissill and The Rois*, of the poet who was sleepy in the morning:

"Quhen Merche wes with variand windis past
And Appryle had, with her silver schouris,
Tane leif at nature with ane orient blast,
And lusty May, that muddir is of flouris
Had made the birdis to begin thair houris,
Amang the tendir odouris reid and quhyt,
Quhois armony to heir it wes delyt;

"In bed at morrow, sleiping as I lay,
Me thocht Aurora, with hir cristall ene
In at the window lukit by the day,
And halsit me, with visage paill and grene;
On quhois hand a lark sang fro the splene,
Awalk, luvaris, out of your slomering
Sé hou the lusty morrow dois up spring.

"Me thocht fresche May befoir my bed up stude,
In weid depaynt of mony diverss hew,
Sobir, benyng, and full of mansuetude
In brycht atteir of flouris forgit new
Hevinly of colour, quhyt, reid, broun and blew,

Quhen, when. Splene, heart.
Tane leif, taken leave. Luvaris, lovers.
Quhois, whose. In weid depaynt, in robes painted.
Heir, to hear. Mansuetude, gentleness.
Ene, eyes. Forgit, made.
Halsit, besought, conjured.

Balmit in dew, and gilt with Phebus bemys
Quhyll all the house illumynit of her lemys.

"'Slugird,' scho said, 'awalk annone for schame,
And in my honour sum thing thou go wryt;
The lark hes done the mirry day proclame
To raise up luvaris with confort and delyt;
Yit nocht incressis thy curage to indyt,
Quhois hairt sum tyme hes glaid and blisfull bene,
Sangis to mak undir the levis grene.'"

Quhyll, while. Lemys, rays. Hes, has.

Sir David Lyndesay, in his poem on *The Dreme*, is the last and most popular of the old school of Scotch poets. He, too, is a disciple of Chaucer, with a spirit very different from that of his master. Chaucer takes little interest in popular disturbances; while Lyndesay is full of desire to reform all classes of the community. He was a man of high moral feeling, and possessed unusual powers of satire and humour. He employed all his capacities unflinchingly in the support of that which he believed to be right. We take a few stanzas of one of his serious poems, on the *Hope of Immortality*:

"All creature that ever God creat,
As wryttis Paul, thay wys to se that day,
Quhen the children of God, predestinat,
Sall do appeir in thare new fresche array;
Quhen corruption beis clengit clene away
And changeit beis their mortal qualitie
In the gret glore of immortalitie.

"We see the gret globe of the Firmament
Continuallie in moveying marvellous;
The sevin Planetis, contrary thare intent,
Are reft about, in course contrarious;
The wynd and see, with stormys furious,
The trublit air, with frostis, snaw, and rane,
Until that day, they travell evir in pane.

"And all the angellis of the ordouris nyne,
Haveand compassioun of our miseries,
Thay wys efter that day, and to that fyne,
To sé us freed frome our infirmeteis,
And clengit from thir gret calamiteis
And trublous lyfe, quhilk never sall have end
On to that day, I make it to thee kend."

Thay wys to se, they wish to see.
Sall do appeir, shall appear.
Beis clengit, is swept, cleaned.
Glore, glory.
Trublit, troubled.
Haveand, having.
Fyne, end.
On to, upon.
Kend, known.

Poetry had been used by Skelton and Lyndesay as a weapon of reform. At the end of Henry the Eighth's reign it was

again practised as an art by the Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt. They had travelled in Italy, and both returned to England with a strong admiration for the poetry of Petrarch.

By the aid of this influence they gave life once more to English poetry. The kind of verse that they introduced was new, and was known by the name of Amourist poetry, for it consisted of sonnets and lyrical pieces dealing with the passion of love. From the exquisite model that they had chosen—for Petrarch was famous for the beauty of his workmanship—they were able to produce effects by which the ruggedness of English verse was restrained and corrected. Lines like Skelton's—short and hard, sacrificing everything to curt expression—could not be admitted into the kind of verse that they desired to produce. They neither of them used so many romance words as Chaucer, and this feature of a purer English afterwards attracted the attention of Spenser and Shakspere. The standard of Surrey and Wyatt was entirely new to England; and it became the one below which later poets did not dare to fall.

Despite their great technical skill, it was not in every kind of verse that Surrey and Wyatt succeeded. Surrey tried to translate the *Æneid* into the unrhymed ten-syllabled lines now known as blank verse. This, as dealt with in later years by Shakspere and Milton, came to be the most stately of all metres. Surrey gave it neither its real form nor its due harmony; he did enough to enable others to realise what capacities it possessed.

Literature found no opportunity of prospering in the reigns of Edward the Sixth and Mary, but the love for purely artistic work which Surrey and Wyatt had planted in England never died completely away. The melancholy interval from Chaucer's time was brought to an end by the publication of a book called the *Miscellany of Uncertain Authors*, which was published in the year before Queen Mary's death. It contained poems by both Surrey and Wyatt, and was the first printed book of Modern English poetry. With it the period of Elizabethan literature may be said to have begun.

A Complaint by Night of the Lover not Beloved.

"Alas! so all things now do hold their peace!
Heaven and earth disturbèd in no thing;
The beasts, the air, the birds, their song do cease;
The nightës car the stars about doth bring.
Calm is the sea; the waves work less and less;
So am not I, whom love, alas! doth wring,
Bringing before my face the great increase
Of my desires, whereat I weep and sing,
In joy and woe, as in a doubtful ease.
For my sweet thoughts do sometimes pleasure bring;

But by and by the cause of my disease
Gives me a pang, that inwardly doth sting.
When that I think what grief it is again
To live and lack the thing should rid my pain."

THE EARL OF SURREY.

The Lover Beseecheth his Lady not to forget his Steadfast and True Intent.

"Forget not yet the tried intent
Of such a truth as I have meant;
My great travail so gladly spent,
Forget not yet!

"Forget not yet when first began
The weary life ye know, since whan
The suit, the service none tell can;
Forget not yet!

"Forget not yet the great assays,
The cruel wrongs, the scornful ways,
The painful patience in delays,
Forget not yet!

"Forget not! oh! forget not this,
How long ago hath been, and is
The mind that never meant amiss,
Forget not yet!

"Forget not then thine own approved,
The which so long hath thee so loved,
Whose steadfast faith yet never moved:
Forget not yet!"

The Lover having Dreamed enjoying of his Love, complaineth that the Dream is not either Longer or Truer.

"Unstable dream, according to the place,
Be steadfast once, or else at least be true;
By tasted sweetness make me not to rue
The sudden loss of thy false feignèd grace.
By good respect, in such a dangerous case,
Thou broughtest her not into these tossing seas;
But mad'st my sprite to live, my care to encrease,

My body in tempest her delight to embrace.
The body dead, the spirit had his desire;
Painless the one, the other in delight.
Why, then, alas! did it not keep it right,
But thus return to leap into the fire;
And when it was at wish could not remain?
Such mocks of dreams do turn to deadly pain."

SIR THOMAS WYATT.

25. The First Period of Elizabethan Literature, 1559-1579—Ascham, Sackville, Gascoigne, and Tottel.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth occupies a unique position in the history of English literature. From her accession in 1559

until 1579, a period of twenty years, there was an enormous increase in the quantity of literary production. New forms of writing, both in prose and verse, were tried, and new ideas were taken up, which were afterwards more thoroughly dealt with by greater men. Though the work of these first twenty years was not in any way so good as the work of the second period, it nevertheless contained all the beginnings of which subsequent times made use. The real development of Elizabethan literature was a slow one, depending on a multitude of causes, rather than on any sudden outburst brought about by continental influences. The literary merits of the second period of Elizabeth's reign were the results of the constant attempts of earlier English writers.

Prose is very slightly represented in the first twenty years. Ascham's *Scholemaster*, published in 1570, is the only book worthy of being classed as literature. Although by the date of its issue it belongs to the days of Elizabeth, it is in spirit and feeling the work of a scholar of the New Learning. It is a thesis upon the best method of teaching Latin, with a discussion as to the different styles of several Latin authors. Like the earlier *Toxophilus*, it shows some complexity of language; yet Ascham's work, however elaborately formal, always preserved a rhetoric which was precise and clear. In the *Scholemaster* can be seen a leaning towards a balance of sentence, traceable through much of the subsequent prose. It is to Ascham that we look for the first definite expression of a prose style.

The poetry of this time is best represented by Sackville, Lord Buckhurst. His verse is good in itself; his merit lies in the perception he had that things were wrong in literature, and that everything should be done to endeavour to make them better. Sackville's poetry is far more restrained than much that had preceded it; and a stiffness of phrase and an undeveloped sense of grace show that the writer was not able to accomplish what he wished. In some of Sackville's stanzas, however, we find a music in the words and a touch of moralising in the thought, which remind us of what is afterwards to be found in Spenser; and Spenser himself, when dedicating a prefatory sonnet in the *Faerie Quene* to Sackville, may have done so in acknowledgment of much that he had learnt from him.

The book which contains Sackville's best work is known by the name of *The Mirror of Magistrates*, and is an imitation of Boccaccio's *Falls of Princes*. *The Mirror* was to contain a series of poetical examples, showing "with how grievous plagues vices are punished in great Princes and magistrates, and how frail

and unstable worldly prosperity is found, where fortune seemeth most highly to favour." Eight different poets contributed to the volume, of whom Sackville was the only one to produce anything of value. He wrote the *Induction* to the whole, and the story of the Duke of Buckingham. The following extracts show most of the leading characteristics of his work. The first is taken from the *Induction*, where sorrow guides the poet to the realms of the dead.

"Then looking upward to the heaven's lemes,
With nighted stars thick powder'd everywhere,
Which erst so glisten'd with the golden streams
That cheerful Phœbus spread from down his sphere,
Beholding dark oppressing day so near,
The sudden sight reducèd to my mind,
The sundry changes that in earth we find. . . .

"And straight forth stalking with redoubled pace,
For that I saw the night draw on so fast,
In black all clad, there fell before my face
A piteous wight, whom woe had all forewaste:
Forth from her eyen the crystal tears out brast;
And sighing sore, her hands she rung and fold,
Tare all her hair, that ruth was to behold.

"I stood aghast, beholding all her plight,
'Tween dread and dolour, so distrain'd in heart,
That while my hairs upstarted with the sight,
The tears outstream'd for sorrow of her smart;
But when I saw no end that could apart
The deadly dewle which she so sore did make,
With doleful voice then thus to her I spake:

"'O Sorrow, alas, sith Sorrow is thy name,
And that to thee this drear doth well pertain,
In vain it were to seek to cease the same;
But as a man himself with sorrow slain,
So I, alas, do comfort thee in pain,
That here in sorrow art foresunk so deep,
That at thy sight I can but sigh and weep.'

"For forth she pacèd in her fearful tale:
'Come, come,' quoth she, 'and see what I shall show,
Come, hear the plaining and the bitter bale
Of worthy men by Fortune overthrow;
Come thou, and see them rueing all in row,
They were but shades that erst in mind thou roll'd;
Come, come, with me, thine eyes shall then behold.'"

Lemes, lights.
Reduced, brought back.
Wight, a person.
Forwaste, wasted with misery.
Brast, burst.
Ruth, pity
Dewle, grief.
Sith, since.
Foresunk, sunk deep.
Bale, sorrow.

George Gascoigne, who came some years after Sackville, produced the first long satire in English, under the name of the

Steele Glas, which appeared in 1576. He is principally known in much the same way as Sackville—not a great writer himself, and anxious above all things to see English poetry improved. His blank verse is faulty; for lyrical poetry he had a distinct gift. His merits lay in perfect sincerity and purity of feeling; his weakness in the lack of power to avoid monotony. The extract now given describes *Piers Plowman*, and is taken from the *Steele Glas*:

"Behold him, priests, and though he stink of sweat,
Disdain him not, for shall I tell you what?
Such climb to heaven before the shaven crowns:
But how? forsooth with true humility.
Not that they hoard their grain when it is cheap,
Nor that they kill the calf to have the milk,
Nor that they set debate between their lords,
By earing up the balks that part their grounds;
Nor for because they can both crouch and creep
(The guileful'st man that ever God yet made),
When as they mean most mischief and deceit,
Nor that they can cry out on landlord's loud,
And say they rack their rents an ace too high,
When they themselves do sell the landlord's lamb
For greater price than ewe was wont be worth.
(I see you, Piers, my glass was lately scoured.)
But for they feed with fruits of their great pains
Both king and knight and priests in cloister pent
Therefore I say that sooner some of them
Shall scale the walls which lead us up to heaven
Than corn-fed beasts, whose belly is their God,
Although they preach of more perfection."

Earing, ploughing.
Balk, a ridge of land left unploughed between furrows, or at the end of a field.

In the year that the *Steele Glas* was produced, a miscellany of verses was also published, bearing the florid name of a *Paradise of Dainty Devices*. This was a collection of many ballads, lyrics, elegies, epigrams, and love poems, written by various hands. With *Tottel's Miscellany*, it proved a useful mine for the later poets of the reign. Numerous translations from the classics made at this time taught English writers a great deal with regard to form and expression, and the versions of the Bible did much to give the whole nation an increased knowledge of their own tongue.

Of the undercurrents which were at work in assisting the development of sound literary taste, the following were the most important. Elizabeth's reign was a time when many English seamen penetrated into foreign lands, and their strange stories certainly added to the national imagination. A vast number of interludes, masques, and plays were acted, and

touched the classes who could hardly be reached by books. These two influences helped to increase a third—the growing love of stories, which had always been a feature of the English character.

We turn now to the history of the versions of the Bible. The influences exercised by them were the most far-reaching of all, and require a special consideration apart from the rest.

26. The Translations of the Bible and their importance in English Literature.

The first Englishman to attempt a complete version of the Scriptures was Wiclif, in the second half of the fourteenth century; but of this version the Gospels alone can be identified as his work. In the New Testament the diction is less antique than it is in the Old; for Hereford, Wiclif's friend and assistant, who translated much of the Old, had a strong liking for the archaic Southern dialect of English; while Wiclif himself, and his other coadjutor, Pursey, inclined to Chaucer's favourite dialect of the East Midland. Wiclif's Northern origin showed itself in an occasional mixture of Northern forms, though they are more numerous in his own writings than in his translations. Many of the homely words he employed in his *Bible* were utilised in his tracts and sermons; and his long conflict with authority sent his work all over England, and so familiarised men's minds with the phraseology of his Scriptures.

In 1526 William Tyndale's *Translation of the New Testament* "fixed our tongue once for all." What great strides had been made by English in the century and a half since Wiclif's days may be seen by a comparison of the two versions of a well-known passage; a comparison which at the same time will show how little our Authorised Version has been altered from that of Tyndale. The passage is from the twelfth chapter of Romans, verses 6 to 8. Wiclif's version runs:

"6. Therfor we that han yiftis dyuersynge, aftir the grace that is yiven to us, ethir prophecie, aftir the resoun of feith;
"7. ethir seruise, in mynystryng; ethir he that techith, in techyng;
"8. he that stirith softli, in monestyng; he that yveth, in symplenesse; he that is souereyn, in bisynesse; he that hath merci in gladnesse."

Monestyng, teaching, admonishing.

Tyndale's translation gives:

"6. Seyinge that we have divers gyftes accordinge to the grace that is geven unto us, yf eny man have the gyft off prophecy lett him have it that itt be agreynge unto the fayth.
"7. Let hym that hath an office, wayte on his office. Let hym that techeth take heed to his doctryne.
"8. Let hym that exhorteth geve attendance to his exhortacion. Yf

eny man geve, let hym do it with singlenes. Let hym that rueleth do it with diligence. Yf eny man shewe mercy, lett him do itt with cherfulnes."

That there should be such a gulf between the English of Wiclif and the English of Tyndale, is a proof of the rapid growth of the language during the time from 1380 to 1525. After 1525 such an explanation would be impossible. The effect of Tyndale's translation was to fix the standard of English which subsequent writers had to follow; and nineteen years after Tyndale's version the decision as to his English style was finally endorsed by the issue of Ascham's *Toxophilus*. Sir Thomas More and his friends, writing about 1513, had made no conscious endeavour to treat English as they would have treated one of the learned tongues. The prose of the early part of the sixteenth century therefore possesses a more purely native character than it does under Elizabeth.

The notable resemblance of the Authorised Version to Tyndale's *Bible* is explained by the fact of this definite acceptance of Tyndale's English as the standard tongue. From his time, each one of the intermediate versions of the Scriptures has been largely based upon its immediate predecessor.

Miles Coverdale, ten years after Tyndale, issued the first complete *Bible* supplemented four years later by the *Great Bible* of 1539. The translation of the Psalms in this work, which was issued under the patronage of Thomas Cromwell, has remained without alteration the Psalter of the Book of Common Prayer. A revision of Cromwell's *Bible* appeared in 1540, and was known as Cranmer's *Bible*, which was "set up in every parish church in England."

By the early part of Edward the Sixth's reign, Cranmer and Somerset had brought about the actual Reformation, and compelled the use of the Prayer-Book by all ministers in any cathedral, parish, or other church. This is the Prayer-Book of 1549-52. As a prose work it is not without fault. In many places it is heavy and wants directness, and Latin words are unduly employed. On the whole, it is stately and sonorous; its best feature is the retention of the Psalter from the *Great Bible* of ten years before.

During the last years of Mary's reign and the early years of Elizabeth's the English refugees at Geneva revised the *Great Bible*, and published the work in 1560. A marginal commentary was added, and the chapters were divided into verses. It was known as the *Genevan*, or *Breeches*, *Bible*, and became very popular among the Puritans.

Before Elizabeth had been long on the throne Archbishop Parker caused a revision of Cromwell's *Great Bible* of 1539 to

be made, published in 1568 under the name of the *Bishop's Bible.* Towards the close of the reign the Roman Catholic exiles at Rheims produced a new version from the Vulgate which, from the place of its issue, is known as the *Douay Bible.*

In 1611 the Authorised Version in the form familiar to us all, was completed; and this, with the translations of Wiclif and Tyndale are those which have exercised an influence upon the language. The *Great Bible* and the *Bishop's Bible* are merely modifications of Tyndale's work. The *Breeches Bible* represents the version acceptable to the one extreme party; the *Douay Bible,* the version acceptable to the other.

Cromwell and Cranmer, with the *Great Bible,* brought Tyndale's English home to the people. The Pilgrim Fathers took the Authorised Version of 1611 with them, and fixed by it the standard of English in America.

The Authorised Version although dated 1611, belongs to a period earlier than the time of its issue. Its influence upon the language and the nation is a purely sixteenth century influence, and any estimate of that century would be incomplete which did not take it into account. It is difficult to over-estimate the value of this influence. Many books of the Old Testament lend themselves to little beyond a plain directness of treatment, as in the case of the books of law and ritual, the records of the chroniclers, or the bare statements of events. But whenever an opportunity has occurred—in the sublime passages of the prophetic writings, the poems of the Psalms, the Book of Job, or the poetic narratives of the Pentateuch—then the English employed rises to a height in every way worthy of its themes. In richness of language, in sonority of phrase, and in due balance of sentence it is not to be surpassed in our literature. Its most remarkable feature perhaps is that, with a style affording exquisite pleasure to a cultured mind, there is hardly a passage beyond the understanding of the most illiterate.

27. The Second Period of Elizabethan Literature, 1579-1603. (1) The Early Books—Lyly, Sidney, Webbe, Puttenham.

The second part of Elizabeth's reign was made famous in literature by the great names of Spenser, Shakspere, Hooker, and Bacon. There were many other writers not occupying so high a position, whose work is sometimes of interest only on account of itself, sometimes because it is closely connected with other men or with public affairs. We will take two or three books of the second of these two classes, and consider the points particularly attaching to them.

John Lyly, a poet and dramatist, in 1579 produced a book called *Euphues*, written in a prose, with fanciful style, remarkable for its smoothness and easy flow. Hence it acted as a corrective to the previously-written prose, which had nearly all been worked out in a rougher form. Euphues is a name signifying a man who possesses thorough command over his nerves and his senses, and is, in consequence, able to receive correct impressions of the things and people he happens to meet. It is given to the hero of Lyly's book, who is described as a young gentleman of Athens, possessed of a desire for travel. He therefore journeys into Italy, and resides for a time at Naples, eventually returning home, weary of the gay and frivolous life that he finds among the Italians. The second part of the book is made up of two or three separate stories, and gives an amusing study of an Englishman abroad. Lyly has not so much attempted to tell a tale, as to use his hero Euphues, and the adventures he went through, as pegs whereon to hang his own views of religion, love, or friendship. The book gained its reputation because it fell in with the peculiar taste of Elizabeth's time. Her reign was notably a reign of unrest, when the nation, believing itself free from all its trammels, permitted extravagances which often went to an extreme. The fanciful language, the odd conceits, and the sham gallantry, which are to be found in the pages of *Euphues*, met with ready acceptance among an over-excited people. It was not until a quarter of a century later that Shakspere, with his insight into human nature and his commonsense, destroyed the Euphuistic foolishness by ridicule.

The tone of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* was very different from and very superior to that of Lyly's *Euphues*. The one is as obviously the work of *plebii filius*, the description attached to Lyly's name in the College rolls, as is the other the work of a man of good breeding. *Arcadia* is a romance, but its characters are real; the sentiment is delicate, full of charming and poetic thoughts; and the book gives a picture of the writer, rather than any study of the time. Sidney was regarded "both at home and abroad as the type of what a chivalrous gentleman should be." His death on the field of Zutphen, brought about by the fact that he had lent most of his armour to a brother-officer, was marked by the crowning incident of his career. As he was dying, one of his troopers in the same plight lay near him, and eyed longingly a cup of water which was brought to his officer. Sidney saw the man's imploring look, and, handing him the cup untasted, "Take it," he said, "thy necessity is greater than mine." It was with a spirit such as this that he lived his life, and met death like a soldier and a Christian.

Sidney was never a mere *dilettante*. His *Apology for Poetry*, an excellent criticism of contemporary verse, defended it against the statements of the *School of Abuse* by Stephen Gosson, in which poetry and plays were assailed from the Puritan point of view. In addition to the good work that the *Apology* did, it showed that Sidney was conscious of certain flaws of style in his own *Arcadia*. These flaws he carefully avoided in the *Apology*; and in it produced not only a book written in most excellent prose, but one that created in England a new art—the art of criticism. The interest aroused by it led to the production of two more volumes, each dealing with the same subject. The authors were William Webbe and George Puttenham.

Webbe was a Cambridge graduate, who composed his discourse at an Essex manor-house, where he was engaged as tutor. So far as English poetry itself was concerned, he wrote at a somewhat barren time. Chaucer belonged to a remote age, and Shakspere had not yet begun. Webbe therefore prefaces his discourse upon English poetry by some considerations of writing in general, and speaks in enthusiastic terms of what he had studied at the University. His acquaintance with the classics makes him unable to admire "a balde kind of ryming," which he stigmatises as a "brutish poetrie." His taste was nevertheless sound enough to enable him to appreciate Chaucer, and his "delightsome vayne," and he holds that "the author of the *Sheepehearde's Kalendar* principally deserveth the tytle of the rightest English poet that ever I read." It is interesting to see this attitude in so early a critic, who wrote when much contemporary verse was strained and artificial, and when the finer work of after-years had not yet appeared.

Puttenham's *Art of English Poesie*, published in 1589, is a more elaborate production than that of Webbe. It is divided into three books—the first, of poets and poesie; the second, of proportion; and the third, of ornament. On these points of criticism, Puttenham corresponds very nearly to Webbe. He argues well in his first book that "there may be an art of our English poesie as well as there is of the Latine and Greeke." He is distressed that poets are "now become contemptible," and finds the evil to have sprung largely from the illiberality of princes. At the same time, he is firm in his argument that the poet's art should be employed on worthy themes, and should not be wasted "upon vayne conceits, or vicious or infamous." The most interesting chapter to us now is the last of the first book, where he examines in more or less detail, the writings of various English poets. He shows a warm appreciation for Chaucer, and judiciously criticises Gower. Speaking of pastoral poetry, he

commends Sydney "and that other gentleman who wrote the late *Shepheards Callender*." "For ditty and amorous ode," Puttenham finds "Sir Walter Rawlegh's vayne, most lofty, insolent, and passionate." "Others," he continues, "have also written with much facillitie, but more commendably perchance if they had not written so much nor so popularly," with which remark his treatise fittingly closes.

(2) The Great Books of the Second Period of Elizabethan Literature—Hooker and his Ecclesiastical Polity—Bacon.

English prose made a great advance in one direction by the appearance in 1594 of Richard Hooker's first four books of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Since the days of Richard Pecock no theological work of any standing had been written in English. The Puritan attack upon the stage and the *Martin Marprelate* discussions as to the bishops were carried on by writings cast into pamphlet form. Hooker, composing slowly and carefully, did not bring out any part of his great work until 1594. Then it appeared, a grave and powerful defence of the Church against the Puritans.

Hooker was born at Heavitree, in Devonshire, and in his young days was educated at the Exeter Grammar School. His parents were people in poor circumstances. At last, a prosperous relative gave some help; and with his assistance, backed up by the friendship of Bishop Jewel, Hooker was enabled to enter at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He won his fellowship in 1577, and took holy orders four years later. He held a living in Buckinghamshire for a short time, and in 1585, through the influence of Archbishop Sandys and Bishop Whitgift, was appointed to the mastership of the Temple. Walter Travers, an ardent Puritan, had competed against him for the mastership. Hooker was an equally strong supporter of the Church of England as by law established. Travers, although failing to obtain the mastership, continued to hold the appointment he already had, of afternoon lecturer at the Temple. Here he preached strong Calvinistic doctrines, while Hooker, in his sermons, combatted such views. "The pulpit," Fuller wrote, "spake pure Canterbury in the morning, and Geneva in the afternoon."

Travers eventually charged Hooker with heresy, a charge to which Hooker replied, "with so much quiet learning and humility" that he at once gained the friendship of the Archbishop. Hooker then determined to undertake an investigation, and to make an exposition, of the principles upon which

Insolent, used in the Latin sense of *uncommon*.

the constitution of the Church is based. To obtain the quiet necessary for this work, and to avoid the interruptions of constant disputes, he resigned the mastership of the Temple, and took a quiet country living at Boscombe, in Wiltshire. Here he wrote the first four books of his great work, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity.*

The work was planned to contain eight books, the first of which was to treat of Laws in General; the second, the Use of the Divine Law contained in Scripture, and whether that is the only law which ought to serve for our direction in all things without exception; the third, whether the Form of Laws is so set down in Scripture that no change or addition is lawful; and the fourth, concerning exceptions which had been taken to certain Laws of our Polity, and banished, as being Popish, out of certain Reformed Churches. The fifth book, dealing with the Public Religious Duties of the Church, appeared four years after the others, in 1597. The last three were fragmentary, and appear to have been tampered with; they were not published until eighteen years after Hooker's death.

Hooker's style was based on Latin models, and never lacked solidity or dignity. His sentences were logical, and while he was alive to the sequence of words, the emphatic word was always put into the emphatic place. He demanded the full attention of his readers; and his own intellectual power increased the value of his arguments and conclusions.

It was not the least of Hooker's merits that he thoroughly understood the principles which ruled Church government under Elizabeth. Her management of things ecclesiastical looks, at first sight, like much of her other work as if it were a series of compromises arrived at by accident. A closer acquaintance with it makes us realise that a fixed aim and a guiding hand were always present; that the aim was never lost sight of; and that the hand was made to yield temporarily for the sake of subsequent advantage. It was Hooker's object to present the full theory of this government at its best. His work is not only theological, but philosophic and moral as well.

Apart from all question of his style or finish—with which he did for prose what Chaucer had done, two hundred years before, for poetry—Hooker fills the great position of being the first who used our language for the treatment of one comprehensive subject. There had been before him a prose expression, full of fire and vigour, but with an accompanying crudeness; there had been a reaction to an overflow of poetic feeling, as in Lyly and even Sidney, sweet until it cloyed. There had never been one conception carried out well, philosophical in plan and in idea, until the "poor obscure English priest" took his pen in

hand. He was largely influenced by his knowledge of the classics; and may be regarded as the first English author who was really imbued with the spirit of the Greeks. Hooker employed Latin words without any pedantry, and adorned his prose with unwonted images of poetry. Let the following passage speak for itself: "God which moveth mere natural agents as an efficient only, doth otherwise move intellectual creatures, and especially His holy angels; for beholding the face of God, in admiration of so great excellency they all adore Him, and being rapt with the love of His beauty, they cleave inseparably for ever unto Him. Desire to resemble Him in goodness maketh them unwearіable and even insatiable in their longing to do by all means all manner of good unto all the creatures of God, but especially unto the children of men; in the countenance of whose nature, looking downward, they behold themselves beneath themselves; even as upward, in God, beneath whom themselves are, they see that character which is nowhere but in themselves and us resembled."

Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam.

Francis Bacon, from his earliest youth, was accustomed to an active intellectual life. He was the son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, and was educated at the University of Cambridge. A sojourn of two years on the Continent, chiefly in Paris, helped to prepare him for the struggle of life; and when he returned to England, and was called to the Bar in 1582, he knew, like Ulysses, both men and cities. Two years afterwards he went into Parliament, and immediately made a mark in public affairs. At the court of Queen Elizabeth he had friends, but powerful enemies as well; and he received no office from the queen, except the reversion of a post which did not fall in for years. He was chosen as one of the counsel to conduct the impeachment of Essex, who had long been his benefactor; and incurred much blame for his manner of proceeding with the case. The evidence against Essex was first produced by Coke, who allowed the matter to run off into side issues in a way that made them favourable to Essex. Bacon rose, not being called upon to speak, and pointing out the accusations with greater vigour, treated the evidence in a way more dangerous to Essex. This occurred twice in the course of the trial.

Bacon had been most anxious to get on good terms with the queen; yet beyond the payment to him of twelve hundred pounds, the fine taken from one of Essex's accomplices, he received no more reward from Elizabeth. He had to wait until the accession of James the First, in whose reign he became

Solicitor-General, Attorney-General, and Lord Chancellor; and was dismissed from this last dignity on the ground of corruption. In 1626, he died.

It is best to turn from Bacon the lawyer to Bacon the philosopher and man of letters. The larger part of his work was written in Latin, for he firmly believed that the classical tongues would always have a more enduring value than any modern ones. The first work that he published, however, was in English—a treatise on the *Controversies of the Church*—and the famous *Essays*, to which he really owes his position in literature, and in English as well. Ten of these *Essays* appeared in 1597, some thirty more in 1612, and nearly twenty more in the year before his death. The most famous of his other English works are the *Advancement of Learning*, in 1605, and the *History of the Reign of Henry the Seventh*, in 1622.

From the point of view of English literature, Bacon's *Essays* are undoubtedly his most important production. It is necessary, however, to say a few words concerning the *Novum Organum*, his chief Latin work, and the one on which his reputation as a philosopher principally rests. This and the *Advancement of Learning*, which was translated by Bacon into Latin and greatly enlarged, were to form parts of the *Instauratio Magna*, the Great Restoration, or Revival of Science. This was a vast project, to be completed in six sections, each containing many books, but was never completed.

De Augmentis Scientiarum, the Latin version of the *Advancement of Learning*, with its wonderful survey of the state of learning, was to be the first portion of the whole. The *Novum Organum* was to follow next, which showed the way in which new truths could be discovered by that which is now known as the Inductive Method. It laid stress upon the necessity of going "from particular things to those which are but one step more general, from those to others of greater extent, and so on to such as are universal." The other sections were to comprise a history of nature, a forecast of the new philosophy, and a result of the application of the new philosophy to all the phenomena of the universe.

Bacon's desire was to oppose his *New Organon* to the original *Organon* written by Aristotle. That work had only analysed the form of propositions. Bacon sought for a system of analysis that would make discoveries, by which the power and opportunities of man would be enlarged. Invention, he declared, must be based upon experience; and experience must first be widened by experiment.

Bacon always upheld that the enquirer should accept as frankly as a child whatever truths he found. He spoke against

the false notions which have occupied the human understanding, and complained of how deeply they were rooted in it, and of the harm that they had wrought. He held that they had become perfect idols to human beings, and he classified these idols into four kinds—firstly, those of the market-place, when we take things not for what they are, but for what the common talk, like that of people in the market-place, thinks them to be; secondly, those of the theatre, when we bow down to political adventurers who try to usurp authority over us; thirdly, those which are born in ourselves, as when we assert that human sense is the standard of all things, not realising that there are many existences in creation of which we can have no knowledge at all; and fourthly, those that belong to each particular individual, when, in pursuing his work, he comes to fancy that he knows more than he really does.

The power and style shown in the *Advancement of Learning* are of the highest order. The following passage, speaking of the moral advantages of learning, well illustrates this point.

"Sound learning taketh away the wildness and barbarism and fierceness of men's minds: but indeed the accent had need be upon 'sound'; for a little superficial learning doth rather work a contrary effect. It taketh away all levity, temerity, and insolency, by copious suggestion of all doubts and difficulties, and acquainting the mind to balance reasons on both sides, and to turn back the first offers and conceits of the mind, and to accept of nothing but examined and tried. It taketh away vain admiration of any thing, which is the root of all weakness. For all things are admired, either because they are new, or because they are great. For novelty, no man that wadeth in learning or contemplation throughly, but will find that printed in his heart, *nil novi super terram*. Neither can any man marvel at the play of puppets, that goeth behind the curtain and adviseth well of the motion. And for magnitude, as Alexander the Great, after that he was used to great armies, and the conquests of the spacious provinces in Asia, when he received letters out of Greece, of some fights and services there, which were commonly for a passage, or a fort, or some walled town at the most, he said 'it seemed to him that he was advertised of the battle of the frogs and the mice, that the old tales went of.' So certainly, if a man meditate upon the universal frame of nature, the earth, with men upon it (the divineness of souls except) will not seem much other than an ant-hill, whereas some ants carry corn, and some carry their young, and some go empty, and all to and fro a little heap of dust. It taketh away or mitigateth fear of death or adverse fortune; which is one of the greatest impediments of

Nil . . . terram, nothing new upon earth.

virtue, and imperfections of manners. For if a man's mind be deeply seasoned with the consideration of the mortality and corruptible nature of things, he will easily concur with Epictetus, who went forth one day, and saw a woman weeping for her pitcher of earth that was broken, and went forth the next day and saw a woman weeping for her son that was dead, and thereupon said *Heri vidi fragilem frangi, hodie vidi mortalem mori.* . . .

"It were too long to go over the particular remedies which learning doth minister to all the diseases of the mind, sometimes purging the ill humours, sometimes opening the obstructions, sometimes helping digestion, sometimes increasing appetite, sometimes healing the wounds and exulcerations thereof, and the like; and therefore I will conclude with that which hath *rationem totius*, which is, that it disposeth the constitution of the mind not to be fixed or settled in the defects thereof, but still to be capable and susceptible of growth and reformation. For the unlearned man knows not what it is to descend into himself, or to call himself to account; nor the pleasure of that *suavissima vita, indies sentire se fieri meliorem.* The good parts he hath he will learn to show to the full, and use them dexterously, but not much to increase them. The faults he hath, he will learn how to hide and colour them, but not much to amend them; like an ill mower, that mows on still and never whets his scythe. Whereas, with the learned man it fares otherwise, that he doth ever intermix the correction and amendment of his mind with the use and employment thereof. Nay, farther, in general and in sum, certain it is that *Veritas* and *Bonitas* differ but as the seal and the print: for Truth prints Goodness; and they be the clouds of error, which descend in the storms of passions and perturbations."

The *Essays* are the shrewd comments of one who was at the same time a scholar and a man of the world. They are distinguished by the gravity of thought which was so marked a characteristic of Bacon's mind. He had much wit, though little gaiety, and his writing is often stiff and grave, even when the subject might well have been touched by a lighter hand. Macaulay has well described this peculiarity when he points out how judgment developed in Bacon at a far earlier age than fancy. To illustrate his criticism he quotes two opposite

Heri . . . mori. Yesterday I saw a brittle vessel broken; to-day I have seen a mortal man die.

Rationem totius, the sum of the whole matter.

Suavissima . . . meliorem. Most pleasant life, which consists in our daily feeling ourselves become better.

Veritas, truth. **Bonitas**, goodness.

passages—one from an essay of 1597, the other from an essay of 1612. The circumstances of Bacon's early life possibly will explain the cause. When Bacon was a youth in Paris, after his Cambridge career, and just as the responsible part of his life began, the sudden death of his father put obstacles in his path, which had before seemed so smooth and easy. His first volume of *Essays*, containing only ten of them, therefore dealt exclusively with the relations of a man to life—Of Study, of Discourse, of Ceremonies and Respects, of Followers and Friends, of Expense, of Regiment of Health, of Honour and Reputation; subjects to which his thoughts readily turned. It was reserved for the work of his later years to write of Gardens, Mosques, Travels, Plantations, Buildings, and other relaxations.

The *Essays*, however, represents Bacon's genius for analysis applied to the life of man in the same way that he applied it in his philosophy to nature. The word "essay" was used by him in its most exact sense. The Latin *exigere* meant "to test very exactly." The late Latin *exagium* meant "a weighing," and thence came the Italian *assaggiare*, to prove or try. This gave the French *essai*, and the double forms in English of *assay* and *essay*. An assay of gold is an attempt to weigh and determine accurately its character and value. An essay of anything in human nature was a similar attempt made in the mind; it was an essay *of*, not an essay *on*, as would be the careless phrase of modern times. Every sentence of the *Essays* is compact and polished; full of matter for reflection; and wise, because it contains profound thought put into the best words. The brilliancy of the Renascence is combined with a simplicity of expression; and a wealth of the good matter striven for by More and his friends, is wedded to an English treatment which Hooker himself might have employed. The wide reading of the scholar shows itself always, yet never intrudes; and the tinge of Latinity in the English is far from unpleasant. "We are alternately charmed by the play of fancy, and arrested by a sentence in which the experience of a life-time is compressed."

The second edition of the *Essays* appeared in 1612. The number was raised from ten to thirty-eight, and those that had been already printed were carefully revised. A third edition, issued in 1625, contained fifty-eight essays, and ended with a paper on *The Vicissitude of Things*.

Bacon's *Historie of the Raigne of Henry the Seventh* was the first work he wrote after his fall. It is noted for its skilful studies of character, a good specimen of which is the following account of the king:

"No doubt, in him, as in all men, and most of all in kings,

his fortune wrought upon his nature, and his nature upon his fortune. He attained to the crown, not only from a private fortune, which might endow him with moderation; but also from the fortune of an exiled man, which had quickened in him all seeds of observation and industry. And his times being rather prosperous than calm, had raised his confidence by success, but almost marred his nature by troubles. His wisdom, by often evading from perils, was turned rather into a dexterity to deliver himself from dangers when they pressed him, than into a providence to prevent and remove them afar off. And even in nature, the sight of his mind was like some sights of eyes; rather strong at hand, than to carry afar off. For his wit increased upon the occasion: and so much the more if the occasion were sharpened by danger. Again, whether it were the shortness of his foresight, or the strength of his will, or the dazzling of his suspicions, or what it was; certain it is that the perpetual troubles of his fortunes, there being no more matter out of which they grew, could not have been without some great defects and main errors in his nature, customs, and proceedings, which he had enough to do to save and help with a thousand little industries and watches. But those do best appear in the story itself. Yet take him with all his defects, if a man should compare him with the kings his concurrents in France and Spain, he shall find him more politic than Lewis the Twelfth of France, and more entire and sincere than Ferdinando of Spain. But if you shall change Lewis the Twelfth for Lewis the Eleventh, who died a little before, the consort is more perfect. For that Lewis the Eleventh, Ferdinando, and Henry, may be esteemed for the *tres magi* of kings of those ages. To conclude, if this king did no greater matters, it was long of himself: for what he minded he compassed."

VIII. EDMUND SPENSER.

28. The Life of Spenser.

The exact year of Spenser's birth is unknown, though now generally believed to have been 1552. One of his sonnets, written in 1593 or 1594, speaks of "all those forty" years which his life had spent. He was probably born at about the close of Edward the Sixth's reign, his early childhood being passed in the troublous times of Mary; and he was a little boy of six or seven years old when Elizabeth succeeded to the crown. It is interesting to notice that Raleigh's birth was nearly at

Concurrents, contemporaries.
Long, on account of.
Tres magi, three wise men.

the same time, and Hooker's and Philip Sidney's a year or two later. The happy recollections that he had of his young days are shown by a reference to them in an ode that he wrote two years before his death, when he speaks enthusiastically of

> "Merry London, my most kindly nurse,
> That to me gave this life's first native source,
> Though from another place I take my name,
> A house of ancient fame."

The last two lines refer to a distant relationship which existed between the Spensers in London and the great family of the Spencers of Althorpe. Edmund Spenser's father, however, was apparently in humble circumstances, for the boy had to take a scholarship when he went to the Merchant Taylors' Company School. He did very well in his studies, and attracted the attention of Dr. Grindal, the Bishop of London, who was often present at the visitations. When Spenser left Merchant Taylors' he obtained a sizarship, or serving-clerkship, at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, the college of which the Bishop himself was a member.

The first ten years of Elizabeth's reign, corresponding with Spenser's school-time, passed away in comparative quiet, since the great religious quarrel of Mary's day had been in abeyance. In 1566 a famous Dominican inquisitor was elected Pope, under the title of Pius the Fifth. To him it seemed that one of the duties of his life was the crushing of English heresy, and his agents were busily employed in England declaring that Elizabeth was a bastard, and an apostate, incapable of sitting on a Christian throne. Mary Queen of Scots, whom Elizabeth held captive, the Pope declared to be the only true queen. In 1569 the rebellion of the Earl of Northumberland and the Earl of Westmoreland in the north roused Englishmen from their state of slumber. It was a clear result of the teaching of the Papal agents, and met with the reward Elizabeth had sworn that she would give—"Such a breakfast as was never in the north before." Spenser went up to Cambridge in this same year as a lad of seventeen, and would hear men older than himself speaking with fear and anxiety of the dangers that were approaching.

His college years however, so far as we know of them, passed quietly enough away. He seems to have made some attempts at literature, though Cambridge was not a good place in his day for the bringing up of a poet. The men among whom he grew into manhood were all in favour of the conforming Puritanism of the Church rather than the extreme Puritanism of a certain party. Spenser probably thought as did his seniors, but his Puritanism was not so much religious as political and national. He was at one with the Puritan party in their dislike of Rome, and he was

repelled by the scandals attaching to the Church government. In temper and intellect he had hardly anything in common with the Puritans. He mixed in the pleasant and gallant society which came in his way, and never shared in the fear and dislike with which the Puritans regarded all human interests. Although his life at Cambridge may not have given him much opportunity for cultivation, it at any rate had no hardening or narrowing effect.

He remained at the University until he was twenty-four, when he took his M.A. degree, without obtaining any fellowship. He spent some time at the house where his father was then living, a quaint old place hidden away in a Lancashire moorland valley; fell in love with a "faire widowe's daughter of the glen," whom he constantly praises in his poems. The beautiful Rosalind, as he called her, would have nothing to say to him, yet for many years he remained her true and faithful lover. One immediate result was the development of his poetical powers; to use his own words, as quoted by the commentator on his poems, "His unstayed youth had long wandered in the labyrinth of love, in which time, to mitigate and allay the heat of his passion, or else to warn (as he saith) the young shepherds, his equals and companions, of this unfortunate folly, he composed these twelve Æglogues, applying an old name to a new work."

Life still seemed to Spenser full of trouble; and he could endure the moors and dales no longer. The necessity for finding employment probably urged him on as well, and an opportune correspondence with a friend settled all doubt. A letter came which bid him leave the moors,

> "And to the dales resort, where shepherds rich
> And fruitful flocks bene everywhere to see."

Bene, are.

Spenser accepted the proposal, and made his way to London.

At Cambridge Spenser had formed two friendships of the type specially characteristic of the great universities. One of these was with a man junior to himself, a fellow sizar at Pembroke, by name Edward Kirke. All that is known of him, however, is his warm attachment to Spenser and the fact that he was the commentator upon Spenser's first published book, the anonymous *Shepheardes Calendar*. The other friend, a senior man to Spenser, was Gabriel Harvey, first a fellow of Pembroke, and then a teacher of Civil Law at Trinity Hall. Harvey exercised a great influence over Spenser; and, though subsequent generations have come to regard him as little more than a pedant, the effect of his friendship was essentially for the good. It was Harvey who had written the letter to the

moors; and Spenser renewed and kept up the old intimacy with him from the time of arriving in London.

Harvey introduced him to his own great patron, the Earl of Leicester, and Leicester quickly gave Spenser some employment. Spenser writes in October, 1579: "Dispatched by my lord, I go thither (to France) as sent by him, and maintained (most part) of him, and there I am to employ my time, my mind, to his honour's service." The nephew of the Earl of Leicester was the famous Philip Sidney, and with him Spenser became acquainted. Sidney recognised at once Spenser's unusual powers, and even promise of genius; while to Spenser, Sidney appeared as the highest type of the polished Englishman.

Sidney lived at Penshurst, a beautiful old country house in Kent, where Spenser, during his many visits, finished the *Shepheardé's Calendar*, and began the *Faerie Quene*. The *Calendar* was published in 1580, but Spenser's name did not appear upon it. In the autumn of the same year Spenser accompanied Lord Grey de Wilton to Ireland as his secretary. That unhappy country had become a ceaseless danger to the government. Essex had tried a scheme of colonisation, which failed; Sir Henry Sidney acted on lines less severe than Essex, and likewise failed. Ireland was left to herself for two years, and then threatened to become a base for the movements of the enemy. In the summer of 1580 the government asked Lord Grey de Wilton to attempt an apparently impossible task. He somewhat unwillingly agreed, and offered the post of secretary to the "new poet."

Lord Grey arrived in Ireland at a time of the utmost danger and difficulty. The south of the island was in rebellion, with assistance coming to it from the Pope and from Spain; the north was steeped in treason, and threatening to rise. Round Dublin, the Irish Lords of the Pale, the district subject to English law, were openly in insurrection, and offering to help the rebels in the south. Even to a man like Lord Grey, a brave soldier, and one accustomed to war, the state of Ireland was sufficiently disconcerting. To Spenser, a quiet student of Cambridge, discussing and corresponding with his friends on metres and rhymes, a poet writing his pastorals, his love songs, or his satires, the change was still greater. He found himself cast into a place of almost complete savagery, which could not be extinguished even by the sword.

In 1582 Lord Grey left Ireland, disappointed at a task which from the first he had seen was impossible. Spenser remained behind, undertaking the work of Clerk to the Council of Munster; and when the County of Cork was divided by

Ralegh and the Somersetshire men, Spenser was remembered, and he became one of the Undertakers, holding an estate of some three thousand acres. This was probably in the year 1586. The term of Undertaker was applied to the English gentlemen who settled in Ireland, and "undertook" to keep possession of the lands that had been forfeited to the crown. The estate upon which he went to live, Kilcolman Castle, had formerly belonged to the ancient family of the Desmonds, a branch of the Fitzgeralds, who had once been all-powerful in Munster, and had risen against the English in 1583. Kilcolman was a melancholy and half-ruined place, situated near the high road between Mallow and Limerick, and about three miles from Doncraile. It stood on a plain at the foot of the Galtee Hills; and was close to a wild district—half forest and half bog—which had been one of the great fastnesses of the Desmond rebellion. One of Spenser's pleasantest experiences in his Irish life was the warm friendship which grew up between him and Sir Walter Ralegh.

In 1590, when Ralegh was staying at Kilcolman, Spenser showed him the first three books of the *Faerie Quene*, which were then complete. Ralegh was so struck by them that he insisted upon Spenser accompanying him to England, and Ralegh then took him to court, and presented him to the queen. Elizabeth was graciously pleased with those parts of the *Faerie Quene* that were written in her praise; and Spenser achieved a great triumph in London. The story of it, however, belongs more to his literary life than to his political, and will be told later on. It is sufficient to say here that Spenser was disappointed in the results of his visit, and that he followed up the publication of the *Faerie Quene* by a volume entitled *Complaints*, a volume of nine miscellaneous poems, in which he spoke with considerable frankness about the matters that had caused him so much distress.

After a stay of eighteen months he returned to Ireland, and occupied himself again with Irish affairs. He settled down still more permanently by becoming attached to a charming lady, whom he was fortunate enough to win as a wife; and with her he spent a very happy married life; though he never lost his memory of Rosalind.

In 1598 the tragedy of his life began. A short time previously, between the two Irish rebellions, Spenser had written a paper with the name of *A View of the Present State of Ireland*. In this he advocated the policy of a stronger and firmer rule, with the use of such force as the wild lawlessness of the Irish should render necessary.

In August, Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Tyrone, who had

headed an Irish rising four years before, surprised an English army near Armagh, and destroyed it in a fierce defeat. He then sent a force into Munster, and Munster immediately rose.

On the last day of September Spenser had been appointed by the English Council a Sheriff to the County of Cork; and in October, when the Munster insurrection took place, the insurgents did not forget that Kilcolman had once belonged to the Desmonds, and that Spenser had written his State paper upon the *Discontents*.

The castle was sacked and burnt, and it was said that a newborn child of Spenser's perished in the flames. Spenser with his wife and other children had to fly for their lives. He made his way to London, and died only a few weeks afterwards, in a tavern at Westminster, a broken-hearted and a ruined man. Ben Jonson declared that Spenser perished for lack of bread; but the story seems to have been inaccurate; for Essex sent him twenty pieces, which Spenser returned, saying he had no time to spend them. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, near to the grave of Chaucer; and the costs of the funeral were defrayed by the Earl.

29. The Early Poems of Spenser.

The freshness of the *Shepheardes Calendar* proved Spenser to be a poet greater than any since Chaucer. There was not only skill in his execution; the whole tone of the poem was so pure and true, that men felt a new spirit had risen among them. It was a spirit that led them unconsciously to the love and practice of better things, and helped them in a way that they could feel, even if they could not understand.

The *Shepheardes Calendar* was a pastoral poem, divided into twelve Æglogues, according to the derivation adopted from the Italians of the word which classical writers called "Eclogues." That word literally signifies pieces that are chosen or selected; the other word, Æglogues, means the songs of goat herds.

An Æglogue was written for each month of the year; and Spenser, seeing how his contemporaries had fallen into the error of writing too much in one set manner, resolved that each of his Æglogues should be cast in a different metre. By this means he acquired a greater freedom of expression, and a considerable mastery over rhythm.

Spenser took for himself the familiar name of Colin Clout, from the old poem by John Skelton. His first Æglogue, for the month of January, turned entirely on the subject that, at the time of writing, was most in Spenser's mind—his rejection by the unkind Rosalind. It is a plaintive song of Colin Clout, bewailing the scorn bestowed upon his ardent love. The metre is a

ten-syllabled rhyming six-lined verse. The following stanzas show most of its principal features :

"A shepeheard's boye (no better doe him call),
When Winter's wasteful spight was almost spent,
All in a sunneshine day, as did befall,
Led forth his flock, that had been long y-pent;
So faynt they woxe, and feble in the folde,
That now unnethes their feete could them uphold.

"All as the Sheepe, such was the shepeheard's looke,
For pale and wanne was he, (alas the while!)
May seeme he loved, or els some care he tooke;
Wel couth he tune his pipe and frame his stile.
Then to a hill his faynting flocke he ledde,
And thus him playned, the while his shepe there fedde.

"'Ye Gods of love, that pitie lovers' payne,
(If any gods the paine of lovers pitie),
Look from above, where you in joyes remaine,
And bowe your eares unto my dolefull dittie:
And, Pan, thou shepheard's God that once did love,
Pitie the paines that thou thyself didst prove.

"'Thou feeble flocke, whose fleece is rough and rent,
Whose knees are weake through fast and evil fare,
May witnesse well, by thy ill governement,
Thy mayster's mind is overcome with care:
Thou weake, I wanne; thou leane, I quite forlorne;
With mourning pyne I; you with pyning mourne.

"'I love thilke lasse, (alas! why doe I love?)
And am forlorne, (alas! why am I lorne?)
Shee deignes not my good will, but doth reprove,
And of my rurall musicke holdeth scorne.
Shepheard's devise she hateth as the snake,
And laughes the songs that Colin Clout doth make.

"'Wherefore, my pype, albee rude Pan thou please,
Yet for thou pleasest not where most I would:
And thou, unlucky Muse, that wontst to ease
My musing mynd, yet canst not when thou should;
Both pype and Muse shall sore the while abye.'
So broke his oaten pipe, and down did lye.

"By that, the welked Phœbus gan availe
His weary waine; and now the frosty night
Her mantle black through heaven gan overhaile:
Which seene, the pensive boy, halfe in delight,
Arose, and homeward drove his sonned shepe,
Whose hanging heads did seeme his carefull case to weepe."

Woxe, grew.
Unnethes, scarcely.
Wanne, pale.
Couth, knew he how to.
Lorne, miserable; literally, lost.
Albee, though.
Abye, pay for.
Availe, make to descend.
Sonned, sunned.
Carefull, full of care.

The second Æglogue, for February, is in rhyming couplets, rough in execution, but done somewhat after the manner of Chaucer. The story is of the *Oak and the Briar.*

"There grewe an aged Tree upon the greene,
A goodly Oake had it sometime bene,
With armes full strong and largely displayed,
But of their leaves they were disarayde:
The body bigge, and mightely pight,
Thoroughly rooted, and of wonderous hight;
Whilome had bene the King of the field,
And mochell mast to the husband did yielde,
And with his nuts larded many a swine:
But now the gray mosse marred his rine;
His baren boughes were beaten with stormes,
His toppe was balde and wasted with wormes,
His honour decayed, his branches sere."

Pight, fixed, fastened. **Larded**, made fat.
Mochell, much. **Rine**, rind.
Mast, the fruit of the oak, beech, and other forest trees.
Husband, husbandman, farmer. **Wormes**, wounds.

Beside the Oak-tree grew a Briar, which

"Proudly thrust into thelement,
And seemed to threat the Firmament:
It was embellished with blossomes fayre,
And thereto aye wonned to repayre
The shepheard's daughters to gather flowers,
To peinct their girlonds with his colowres;
And in his small bushes used to shrowde
The sweet nightingale singing so lowde."

Thelement, the element; the air. **Wonned**, were accustomed.

All this made the Briar so conceited that he one day began to scold the Oak, and reproached him with his age and uselessness. He spoke so angrily and disdainfully, and flaunted himself with his own importance, that the poor old gentleman, being so weak and feeble, could not reprove him as he should have done, but stood silent, wroth at the idea that he had been insulted by a common weed. Soon after, the Husbandman, coming that way, was hailed by the Briar, who put before him a piteous but perfectly untruthful statement of the tyranny of the Oak. The Husbandman, too angry to listen to reason, quickly fetched his axe, and felled the Oak-tree. But vengeance fell upon the Briar immediately the winter set in, for it had then no big Oak to give it shelter; so that it fell, crushed by the snow, and was then trodden down by the cattle; and died a death far more ignominious than that of the tree it had slandered.

The third, for March, is modelled on Theocritus, and deals with Cupid's skill in shooting. It is written with a gay and

lively swing in six-line stanzas. The April Æglogue is famous for the song it contains in praise of Elizabeth, one of the best things in the whole *Calendar*. The following lines are typical:

"Ye dayntye Nymphes, that in this blessed brooke
Doe bathe your brest,
Forsake your watry bowers, and hether looke,
At my request;
And eke you Virgins, that on Parnasse dwell,
Whence floweth Helicon, the learned well,
Helpe me to blaze
Her worthy praise,
Which in her sexe doth all excell.

"See, where she sits upon the grassie greene,
(O seemely sight!)
Yclad in scarlot, like a mayden Quene,
And ermines white;
Upon her head a Cremosin coronet,
With Damaske roses and Daffadillies set;
Bay leaves betweene,
And primroses greene,
Embellish the sweete Violet.

"Tell me, have ye seene her angelick face,
Like Phœbe fayre?
Her heavenly haveour, her princely grace,
Can you well compare?
The Red rose medled with the White yfere,
In either cheeke depeincten lively chere:
Her modest eye,
Her Majestie,
Where have you seene the like but there?

"I saw Phœbus thrust out his golden hedde,
Upon her to gaze:
But, when he sawe how broade her beames did spredde,
It did him amaze.
He blusht to see another Sunne belowe,
Ne durst again his fyrye face out showe;
Let him, if he dare,
His brightnesse compare
With hers, to have the overthrowe."

Cremosin, crimson. **Depeincten**, painted.
Medled, mixed, mingled. **Lively chere**, friendly welcome.
Yfere, companion.

The Æglogue for May shows Spenser as a champion of the Reformed Church. The one for June is a continuation of the theme for January. Rosalind prefers somebody else to Colin; and Colin laments his fate in musical eight-lined stanzas. In July comes a religious pastoral, in which good shepherds represented by Bishop Grindal, then in disgrace, are contrasted with "goat-herds proud," such as Aylmer, the Archbishop of

Some of the work in the *Shepheardes Calendar* is distinctly poor; some, on the contrary, is very good. The dignity and stateliness which marked his greater poem are not to be found in it; but there is a command over harmonious verse, and there are numberless passages of sweetness and melody. Spenser revived what had not been understood since the days of Chaucer—the great possibilities that belonged to the English tongue. The verses of his *Calendar* showed what music and grace were in that tongue, and what wonderful resources it contained. The setting of the various poems is perhaps grotesque, but Spenser's mastery over his art is always perceptible. The pains that he took with the twelve Æglogues showed him that for better work he must employ a really satisfactory stanza.

30. The Faerie Quene.

At the time that the *Shepheardes Calendar* was published, the *Faerie Quene* was partly planned, and a little of it was actually written. How carefully Spenser thought over his work, and what pains he took in its production, is shown by the letter he sent to Sir Walter Ralegh, which explained the meaning that he intended his allegory to bear. "The general end of all the book," he writes, "is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous or gentle discipline. I chose the history of King Arthur, as most fit, for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many men's former works. . . . In which I have followed all the antique poets historical; first Homer, who in the person of Agamemnon and Ulysses hath ensampled a good governor and a virtuous man; then Virgil, whose like intention was to do in the person of Æneas. After him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando, and lately Tasso revealed them again, and formed parts in two persons, namely Rinaldo, with the virtues of a private man, and Godfredo, with the virtues of a public man. By ensample of which excellent poets, I labour to pourtray in Arthur, before he was king, the image of a brave knight perfected in the twelve private moral virtues as Aristotle hath devised; the which is the purpose of these first twelve books; which, if I find to be well accepted, I may be perhaps encouraged to frame the other part of political virtues in his person, after that he came to be king." Here we have one of the most interesting revelations from a poet himself of his plan of work, and of his hope for carrying out the scheme. But so gigantic a task was not to be accomplished. Only six books out of the proposed twenty-four were written, and of the seventh a few fragments are all that remain. It was Spenser's intention that

the *Faerie Quene* should be depicted as holding a feast of twelve days, upon each of which one of Arthur's knights should relate his adventures. The first book tells the legend of the Red Cross Knight, who typifies Holiness in the allegory, and of his noble deeds in defence of the virgin Una, who typifies Truth as taught in the Protestant belief. The second book tells of Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, which signifies the restraint of vice, cruelty, and violence in every form. The third book speaks of Chastity; the fourth of Friendship; the fifth of Justice; and the sixth of Courtesy. The fragments of the seventh are said to be of Constancy. The climax of the poem was to be the union of King Arthur, who typified the Magnificence of All the Virtues, with the Faerie Quene, who signified the Divine Glory. Arthur, declared Spenser, had seen the Queen of Faerie Lande in a vision, and went forth to seek her. "In that Faerie Quene," he wrote, "I mean glory in my general intention; but in my particular, I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our Sovereign the Queen."

Though the main scheme of the poem is simple, the working of it out proved to be a task beyond Spenser's power. The mastery of a long and complicated plan was more than he could accomplish. In the first book the story proceeds with tolerable coherence. It takes as its basis the belief that religion is the foundation of all goodness, and depicts the struggle between truth and righteousness on one side, and error and consequent wickedness on the other. Una, representing the Truth or the Protestant religion, opposes Duessa, the type of the Roman Catholic religion. Elizabeth's rival, Mary Queen of Scots, is pictured in this figure of Duessa. The Red Cross Knight, St. George of England, baffles the craft of Duessa, the cunning of the sorcerer, and the pride of the Apocalyptic Beast and Dragon. He frees Una from their clutches, and wins her love. The incessant warfare of godliness and sin, the changes in the conflict, and the final triumph of righteousness are all drawn clearly and well.

The second book, on Temperance, tells us of the struggle of a man with his passions, and relates the history of Sir Guyon and his conquest of many enemies of goodness, as well as of his destruction of the evil Acrasia, goddess of licentiousness, and of her abode, the Bower of Bliss. In these two books Spenser held the threads of his allegories firmly together. The third book, Chastity, repeats the ideas of the latter part of the second, with Britomart, a heroine, in the place of a knight. There is also a great praise of the feeling for purity which was then the creed of Elizabeth's courtiers.

The second instalment of the *Faerie Quene* (books 4 to 6), not published until 1595, distinctly shows the looseness of the plan. The note of one particular virtue for each book becomes more and more indistinct. Every one of the twenty-four was to have twelve cantos in itself, and it was impossible for Spenser to find sufficient material to complete them all. Hence one canto is filled out with a genealogy of British kings; another has a long descriptive account of the English and Irish rivers; another a fascinating catalogue of the months and seasons. Into his poem he could manage to fit anything that seemed to him to be of interest; and so, in the latter books, he writes much on contemporary history. The defeat of Duessa, who represented Mary Queen of Scots, was drawn only figuratively in Book I. In the second part she is called by many names, and pictured in many disguises. She is apparently shown as Florimel, the creature of enchantment, who constantly stirs up strife, and is fought for by the knights whom she deceives; she is typified by Blandamour and Paridell, who represent the intriguers of 1571; and possibly by the fierce temptress, Radegund, Queen of the Amazons. Mary's actual fate is drawn in the history of Duessa's doom; and the ninth and tenth cantos of book five are those for which James the First desired that Spenser should be tried and punished.

The defeat of the Armada, the war in the Low Countries, the deliverance of England from the result of Desmond's rebellion in Ireland, are all incorporated in the Legend of Justice. The poem is not a clear and comprehensive whole as Spenser had hoped, and we cannot treat it as such. It must be taken simply in its parts.

The stanza which Spenser employed, and which now is known by his name, is one that he invented himself. The Italians had used an eight-line stanza, adopted by Chaucer in his *Monke's Tale*. To this Spenser added a ninth line rhyming with the eighth, but longer than it by one foot. This addition had a most remarkable effect, inasmuch as it made the stanza peculiarly susceptible to Spenser's power of harmonious expression.

Spenser's language, like his stanza, is to all intents and purposes his own. He thinks nothing of altering a word to make it fit his metre, or to use it as a rhyme. He does not hesitate to employ one part of speech in the place of another, or to create a new word when he wants it, even though there is one already in use. Sometimes he merely alters a letter or two; sometimes he twists off the head or the tail of the word altogether. Sidney was one of the first to condemn the

practice. "The *Shepherd's Calendar*," he writes in his *Apologie for Poetrie*, "hath much poesy in his eclogues indeed worthy the reading if I be not deceived. That same framing of his style to an old rustic language I dare not allow."

A grave fault, due to certain tendencies of the age, was the want of restraint and proportion shown by Spenser. This was because the days of the Tudors were filled with excitement and hope; the time when it seemed as if the old conditions of English life had entirely passed away, and that new conditions were opening up a perpetual success with no possibility of disaster. The nation was carried away by a belief in its own prosperity; and calmness of judgment was wanting on every side. Literature had received assistance from a more definite acquaintance with the classics, but it entirely failed to recognise the self-restraint and the sense of proportion which give the classics their value. Spenser fell into the snare of thinking he made his subjects impressive when they were only diffuse.

Blemishes as these may be in Spenser's work; there always remain those great merits before which criticism is silent and admiration reigns supreme. A beautiful stateliness belongs to Spenser's fairyland, which seems to give the promise of a brighter world, attainable even in an earthly life. For this two things are essential—an honest endeavour to live in truth and virtue, and a resolute opposition to everything impure and base.

All the good qualities that Spenser upholds depend, therefore, upon the sense of manliness for their support. This implies the possession of many virtues, bravery, honour, prudence, and sympathy among them. It is as far removed from the rough blood-thirstiness of the old Teutonic viking, as is the feeling of honour from the commercial shrewdness of the Wife of Bath. Such a desire belonged to Spenser's age, and was practised in many ways by certain men of his time.

31. Spenser at Court.

When Ralegh went over to Ireland in 1589, being at the time out of favour with Elizabeth, he took the opportunity of visiting his old acquaintance, Spenser; and was shown by him the work that he had then done in connection with the *Faerie Quene*. Ralegh had perception enough to see that the first three cantos were vastly superior to almost any other English poetry. He insisted that Spenser should return to England with him, and present his poems to the Queen. Spenser agreed to do so; and Ralegh, with whom, for some reason, Elizabeth became on good terms again, took him to the Court. The Queen

listened graciously to the stanzas written in her glorification, and she granted Spenser a pension of fifty pounds a year, which the Lord Treasurer always objected to paying. The *Faerie Quene* was then registered at the Stationers' Company, and appeared early in 1590. It was introduced by a large number of sonnets and poems, which begged for the good graces of those to whom they were severally addressed. The most striking dedication was the one to the Queen—"Edmund Spenser doth, with all humilitie, dedicate, present, and consecrate these his labours to live with the eternitie of her fame."

The poem was received with general applause, and Spenser was regarded at once as the head of the living poets. His *Shepheardes Calendar*, in 1580, had raised great hopes of his powers; and the *Faerie Quene*, of ten years later, did more than fulfil them. In 1590 Shakspere was in London, but had not yet realised his full powers. Sidney's *Defense of Poesie* was published; and the *Arcadia* was written, though not produced. Marlowe had begun to write; and the first marks of the change soon to take place in the English drama were making themselves seen. Hooker, too, was handling English prose in a manner that had never been known before. They were all virtually beginners; Spenser, as a finished poet, stood alone.

Spenser, however, found that a court life was one in which it was difficult for him to succeed. He had great hopes of assistance from his friends Ralegh and the Earl of Essex; but each of them was too much occupied with his own affairs to be able to do anything for him.

In the year next after the publication of the *Faerie Quene* he issued a volume under the title of *Complaints, containing Sundry Small Poems of the World's Vanity*, in which were included several pieces that had been written some years before, while others had special reference to his visit to London. The poems were *The Ruines of Time*, dedicated to Sidney's sister, the Countess of Pembroke; a series of mournful laments in the Chaucerian stanza, on the death of Sir Philip Sidney; *The Teares of the Muses*, where each muse lamented the decay of the art over which she had control; *Virgil's Gnat*, a translation of a Latin poem, dedicated long before to the "most noble and excellent lord, the Earl of Leicester, late deceased"; *Mother Hubberd's Tale*, the best piece in the volume; the *Fate of the Butterfly*, an original allegory by Spenser, written in an eight-lined stanza; the *Ruines of Rome* and *Visions*, translated from the French poet, Joachim Du Bellay; the *Visions of the World's Vanity* and the *Visions of Petrarch*, both written in sonnet form.

The following stanzas come from the *Teares of the Muses*, being

of the lamentation of Thalia at the change that had come public taste with regard to comedy:

"Where be the sweete delights of Learning's treasure,
That wont with Comick sock to beautefie
The painted theaters, and fill with pleasure
The listner's eyes and eares with melodie;
In which I late was wont to raine as Queene,
And mask in mirth with Graces well beseene.

"O, all is gone! and all that goodly glee,
Which wont to be the glorie of gay wits,
Is layd abed, and no where now to see;
And in her room unseemly Sorrow sits,
With hollow browes and grisly countenaunce,
Marring my joyous gentle dalliaunce.

"And him beside sits ugly Barbarisme,
And brutish Ignorance, ycrept of late,
Out of dredd darkness, of the deepe Abysme
Where, being bredd, he light and heaven does hate;
They in the mindes of men now tyrannize,
And the faire scene with rudenes foule disguize.

"All places they with follie have possest,
And with vaine toyes the vulgare entertaine;
But me have banishèd, with all the rest
That whilom wont to wait upon my traine;
Fine Counterfesaunce and unhurtfull Sport,
Delight and Laughter, deckt in seemly sort.

"All these, and all that els the Comick stage
With seasoned wit and goodly plesance graced,
By which man's life in his likèst imàge
Was limnèd forth, are wholly now defaced;
And those sweete wits, which wont the like to frame,
Are now despized, and made a laughing game. . . .

"So am I made the servant of the manie,
And laughing stock of all that list to scorne;
Not honorèd nor carèd for of anie,
But loath'd of losels as a thing forlorne;
Therefore I mourn and sorrow with the rest
Untill my cause of sorrow be redrest."

Ycrept, crept. List, choose. Losels, abandoned fellows.

'other Hubberd's Tale, the story of the Ape and Fox, pointedly :ribes the treacheries that Spenser had seen at court; intrigues, the jealousies, the rivalries for preferment both in rch and State. The Fox and the Ape, who was the Fox's :hbour and gossip, went out into the world to try to mend r fortunes. They would not take up any occupation; to be beggars was enough. They would protect themselves from rference by pretending to be soldiers—"That now is thought vil begging sect." The Ape, because he was more like a man ı the Fox, was to be the soldier; the Fox would be ready to

help him, if assistance were wanted. Spenser thus reproved the abuse of an honourable calling, as a thing that brought unmerited disgrace upon the army. Then the Ape turned shepherd, with the Fox for sheep-dog. A flock was put under their charge; but

> "Not a lamb of all their flocke's supply,
> Had they to show; but ever as they bred,
> They slue them, and upon their fleshes fed."

This involved a sudden flight; and their next appearance was in a new occupation:

> "Much like to begging, but much better named."

Robing themselves in cassock and gown, they begged of a priest, giving themselves out to be poor clerks. Spenser then wrote a bitter satire on the lives of the indolent clergy, in the words which he put into the priest's mouth when advising the Fox and the Ape how to get preferment. They must dress themselves better, affect religious zeal, and wait on a religious nobleman. If they care to go to court for promotion, they must learn to laugh, to lie, to crouch, to please, to scorn, to mock, and the courtiers must also be bribed. The Fox and Ape thought the priest delightful; and, following up his suggestions, the Fox before long was a parish priest, with the Ape as his clerk. In a very short time, they had both so disgraced themselves, that they flew for their lives; and then tried to make their way among the courtiers. The Ape, walking on tip-toe, passed himself off as a grandee; the Fox, as his valet, supported him. This was Spenser's opportunity for a satire as biting as the other upon the vices and follies of the court; with a wonderful description of the humiliations of an unsuccessful suitor. On the opposite side of the picture, came the study of a true and honourable man. For the latter description, Spenser drew on the character of Sidney.

The Fox and the Ape left the court as hastily as they had given up their shepherding or their living. But happening to come upon the Lion, when he was asleep, they stole his crown and skin, and passed themselves off as royalty. The Ape was king; the Fox his minister. Then came Spenser's satire on misgovernment, with several fierce attacks upon men, whom he hardly disguised in his verse. One of the greatest nobles in the realm was typified by the Fox; and the administration of the day was condemned in all its branches. The Lion, being eventually aroused, set to work to wreak his vengeance on the culprits. The Fox, however, managed to escape,

> "But th' Ape's long taile (which he then had), he quight
> Cut off, and both eares pared of half their hight;
> Since which all Apes but halfe their eares have left,
> And of their tailes are utterlie bereft."

Soon after the publication of the book Spenser returned to Ireland, and in December, 1595, appeared his metrical account of the visit to England, under the title of *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*. Here, using the name he had adopted since the days of the *Shepheardes Calendar*, Spenser told how, under Ralegh's guidance, he had visited the court, and how he had enjoyed the brilliant scenes in which he had been permitted to take part. He spoke of the great ladies, the statesmen, the courtiers, and the famous people. He wrote kindly things about his rivals in poetry-making, and admitted that the whole change of life dazzled and delighted him. Then came a disillusionment, and he returned home to be free in a peaceful place from ambition and intrigue; and to be able to follow a purer ideal of love than he had found possible in a brilliant but corrupt society.

32. His Marriage and his Last Poems.

At the end of *Colin Clout*, Spenser touches upon a subject which was probably nearer to his heart than anything he saw among all the first attractions of the court. This was his old boyish love for Rosalind, a passion which seems to have played a far greater part in his life than any of his friends believed. He knew that his case was hopeless; but the memory of Rosalind he always preserved, and was faithful to it until his dying day. It was not a memory that soured and wounded him. There was too much tenderness and genuine feeling in Spenser's nature to make such a thing possible. Nor did it debar him from wooing and winning another lady, whom he immortalised in the last book of the *Faerie Quene*, and to whom he addressed a long series of *Sonnets*. But the most superb tribute to her who became his wife was in the *Epithalamion*, or great Wedding Ode, the finest poem of its kind in any language, "the most beautiful of all bridal songs," "unquestionably one of the grandest lyrics in English poetry." A few of its stanzas will speak for it—tender and loving in its imagination, refined and self-restrained with all its passion:

Epithalamion.

"My love is now awake out of her dreames,
And her fayre eyes, like stars that dimmèd were
With darksome cloud, now show theyr goodly beams
More bright than Hesperus his head doth rere.
Come now ye damzels, daughters of delight,
Helpe quickly her to dight:
But first come ye fayre houres, which were begot,
In Jove's sweet paradise of Day and Night;
Which doe the seasons of the year allot,

And all that ever in the world is fayre
Doe make and still repayre:
And ye three handmayds of the Cyprian Queene,
The which doe still adorne her beauties' pride,
Helpe to addorne my beautifullest bride;
And as ye her array, still throw betweene
Some graces to be seene;
And, as ye use to Venus, to her sing,
The whiles the woods shal answer, and your eccho ring.

"Lo! where she comes along with portly pace,
Lyke Phœbe, from her chamber of the East,
Arysing forth to run her mighty race,
Clad all in white, that seemes a virgin best.
So well it her beseemes, that ye would weene
Some angell she had beene.
Her long loose yellow locks lyke golden wyre
Sprinckled with perle, and perling flowres atweene,
Doe lyke a golden mantle her attyre;
And, being crownèd with a girland greene,
Seeme lyke some mayden Queene.
Her modest eyes, abashèd to behold
So many gazers as on her do stare,
Upon the lowly ground affixed are;
Ne dare lift up her countenance too bold,
But blush to hear her prayses sung so loud,
So farre from being proud.
Nathelesse doe ye still loud her prayses sing,
That all the woods may answer, and your eccho ring.

"But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,
The inward beauty of her lively spright,
Garnisht with heavenly guifts of high degree,
Much more-then would ye wonder at that sight,
And stand astonisht lyke to those which red
Medusaes mazeful hed.
There dwels sweet love, and constant chastity,
Unspotted fayth, and comely womanhood,
Regard of honour, and mild modesty;
There vertue raynes as Queene in royal throne
And giveth lawes alone,
The which the base affections doe obey,
And yeeld theyr services unto her will;
Ne thought of thing uncomely ever may
Thereto approch to tempt her mind to ill.
Had ye once seene these her celestial threasures,
And unrevealèd pleasures,
Then would ye wondér, and her prayses sing,
That al the woods should answer, and your echo ring. . . .

Cyprian Quene, Venus, born on the island of Cyprus.
Portly, of a noble appearance. Seems, becomes, befits.
Perling, with a rippling motion of their petals.
Band, bond or agreement.
Spright, spirit. Red, dressed, did up.
Mazeful, winding, intricate, embarrassing (applied to the snakes on Medusa's head).

"Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,
Hearing the holy priest that to her speakes,
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush up in her cheekes,
And the pure snow, with goodly vermill stayne,
Like crimson dyde in grayne;
That even th' Angels, which continually
About the sacred Altare doe remaine,
Forget their service, and about her fly,
Ofte peeping in her face, that seems more fayre
The more they on it stare.
But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,
Are governèd with goodly modesty
That suffers not one looke to glance awry
Which may let in a little thought unsownd.
Why blush ye, love, to give to me your hand,
The pledge of all our band!
Sing, ye sweet Angels, Alleluya sing,
That all the woods may answere, and your eccho ring."

Of Spenser's other poems, *Astrophel, a pastorall elegie upon the death of the most noble and valorous knight, Sir Philip Sidney*, bears witness to his profound love and respect. Spenser's last work appeared in 1596, when he published a volume of *Four Hymnes*—a *Hymne in Honour of Love*, a *Hymne in Honour of Beautie*, a *Hymne to Heavenly Love*, a *Hymne to Heavenly Beautie*. The first two had appeared many years previously. The Countess of Cumberland did not like them, and asked Spenser to recall them. In a quaint preface he explains that he is unable to do so, by reason that many copies thereof were scattered abroad. He therefore reforms them by making, instead of these two hymns of earthly love and beautie, two others of heavenly and celestial.

The last of all his productions was a *Prothalamion*, or *Spousall Verse*, made on the occasion of the marriages of Lady Elizabeth and Lady Katherine Somerset, daughters of the Earl of Worcester. This contains another reference to the disappointments he underwent in England:

"I (whom sullein care
Through discontent of my long fruitlesse stay
In Princes Court, and expectation vayne
Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away
Like empty shaddowes, did afflict my brayne)
Walkt forth to ease my payne
Along the shoare of silver streaming Themmes."

33. Spenser's Work.

Although Spenser stands out as one of the greatest ornaments of Elizabeth's reign it must always be remembered that he is a representative of the Renaissance in England, and not the

exponent of English life and thought. So far as the actual growth of the language is concerned, he is no safe guide, for his diction was purposely archaic, and he copied words and phrases from the times of Chaucer which were entirely obsolete in his own day. For this he was blamed by many of his contemporaries, but he worked as an artist rather than with the set purpose of describing his own times. The note of his poetry was distinctly allegorical throughout, and made no pretence to be a picture of real life. As has been excellently said, "He took without ceremony any piece of old metal—word, or story, or image—which came to his hand, and threw it into the melting-pot of his imagination, to come out fused with his own materials, often transformed, but often unchanged." His strength lay in his imagination, his command of words, and his skill at making new ones when none were in existence that would suit his purpose. The result was a continuous harmony and sweetness of verse. His greatest fault was lack of self-restraint. He was so filled with knowledge, and so gifted with fancy, that he was on occasions, completely controlled by his own powers. He seemed to lose all command over them, and to be swayed at their mercy in every direction.

Spenser was far stronger in his conception of righteous manliness, the dominant tone of Elizabeth's day. He added a grace and dignity which was his own, and gave it a purity which seemed to belong to it as a matter of course. This was due to the good influences exercised upon him in his younger days, to his seven years' life at a great university, and to his acquaintance with some of the most distinguished men of the age. It was impossible for one with so impressionable a brain to come into contact with men of the type of Sidney and Ralegh and not to benefit by it. They could speak with the knowledge of things possessed by men of action, and with the refinement and cultivation of courtiers, scholars, and poets. It was from them that Spenser took his models for the knights; heightening their portraits with touches prompted by his affection.

IX. THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE DRAMA.

34. Miracle Plays, Mysteries, Moralities, and Interludes.

The earliest dramatic representations in England were the Mystery and Miracle plays, both of which dealt with legends of the saints, or illustrated scenes and episodes from the Bible. These plays were used with a very definite purpose. In early days few but the clergy could read, and it was not the custom to preach to the people. At the same time, an effort was made to teach illiterate men the history of the Bible, and to interest

them in the lives of the saints and martyrs. This could be most conveniently done by rough dramatic tableaux, which conveyed, with the least trouble, some kind of idea into uncultivated minds.

One of the earliest of these Miracle plays is on the story of St. Catherine, and was the work of Geoffrey, the Abbot of St. Albans, about the year 1100. In the reign of Henry the Second many such plays were acted, and in the days of Chaucer they had become a resort for idle people in Lent.

The clergy and the laity alike took part in them, until they increased in popularity to such an extent that, about 1268, the Town Guilds found it desirable to undertake the management of them, and carried them on with much greater order, and on a larger scale.

The plays were then acted in sets, illustrating sacred history from the Creation to the Judgment. The difference between the two kinds was that the Miracle play represented a piece of Scripture history or the life of a saint, while the Mystery was only concerned with those portions of the New Testament which dealt with mysterious subjects—the Incarnation, the Resurrection, or the like.

Neither Miracle plays nor Mysteries, however, had much literary value, and the Elizabethan drama was in no way affected by them. What they did do was to popularise the liking for dramatic representations, and they prepared the way for the performance of plays which dealt with subjects not connected with the Church.

The Moralities, which first appeared in the fifteenth century, were of much more importance. They were at first nothing more than allegories. Vices and Virtues were personified as in the mediæval poems, but the characters had no individuality; they were not pictures of real persons, and the dialogue had no resemblance to real conversation. The characters were collected into a rough story. At the finish, Virtue triumphed, or a moral principle was insisted upon. The Vices and Virtues soon proved very dull. They were merely abstractions, and not human beings. So historical personages were introduced who were famous for some great virtue or some pronounced vice. The Morality was then made use of during the quarrels of the Reformation to support either the Catholic or the Protestant side. Living people who were well known were satirised in the representations of the characters, and the follies and vices of the time were ridiculed. A demand made itself felt for a comedy and a tragedy which should depict human life. Hence arose the Interludes, of which the best known are John Heywood's, written for representation at the

Court of Henry the Eighth. Heywood turned the Interlude into a farce, and practice developed it into the Comedy.

35. The second stage of the Drama. Latin and Italian influences—Sackville, Gascoigne, Whetstone, Kyd, and Lyly.

The early Elizabethan drama may be classified under three heads; the English popular drama; the Latin; and the Italian.

The popular or rudimentary drama includes the Miracle and Mystery plays; the Morality and Interlude; and the rough farce and chronicle play, which developed from the union of the other two.

For the Latin drama, the models were, in tragedy, Seneca; in comedy, Plautus and Terence; versions of whose plays and methods were followed by Udall and Sackville. This Latin play disdained to make any use of the old English buffoonery found in the Mysteries and Moralities, so that Udall's comedy, *Roister Doister*, thoroughly English in plot, incident, and dialogue, has its construction based entirely upon comic classical methods.

The Italian influence became most powerful in the later Elizabethan stage. It was itself derived from the Latin drama, and is found clearly marked in tragedies like Gascoigne's *Jocasta* and Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, or in comedies such as Gascoigne's *Supposes*. This influence, however, kept, as the Latin influence did, entirely to itself, until, in the later Elizabethan drama, an amalgamation of all the three took place.

The popular or rudimentary Old English drama was, in fact, the real favourite of the people. It stood by itself until 1579, and then, absorbing the two other elements, gave a great deal of its own peculiar tone to the Elizabethan drama. Large portions of the form of the history-play, and of the clownage and humorous part of the comedy, are distinctly due to the Old English moralities.

No masterpiece of the Elizabethan stage appeared until after these three streams of influence had combined peacefully into one. In some plays the effect of one of them can be traced more readily than the effect of the other two, but every Elizabethan play of the highest rank was touched by all the three.

Sackville, who has already been spoken of with regard to his poetry, produced in 1562, in conjunction with another poet called Thomas Morton, the first regular English tragedy, known as *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex*. Gorboduc, King of Britain, was father of the other two characters, and divided his kingdom between them during his lifetime. They soon after quarrelled, the younger, Porrex, killed the elder. The mother (Videna)

who loved the elder one best, for revenge slew Porrex. The people, upon this, rose in rebellion, and murdered both king and queen. The nobles then destroyed the rebels, and fell to civil war among themselves. The story was taken from the fabulous legends that appear in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History*. As a work of genius it is of no account, for it hardly contains one memorable line. As a work of art it shows taste and skill on the part of the authors. Its chief merit consists in the regularity of the plot, and of the metre; and in its general good sense. The political maxims contained in it were grave and profound. It showed the evils of divided rule, and the necessity for making the crown permanent.

Gascoigne, in 1566, wrote his *Jocasta* in blank verse, and put a chorus after each act. It was little more than a translation of an Italian play, *Giocasta*, which was itself an adaptation of Euripides' *Phoinissai*. The *Supposes*, a prose comedy, apparently the first of its kind in English, was taken from a play by Ariosto.

George Whetstone showed much more originality than either Sackville or Gascoigne in his *Promos and Cassandra*, the basis of which came from an Italian source, and is the same that was used by Shakspere in his *Measure for Measure*. This play is written in rhyming ten-syllable verses, sometimes in couplets, but more often arranged in the four-line stanzas which Shakspere used, though only in his early plays. The following lines give a fair example of Whetstone's work, which may be compared with Shakspere's treatment of the same incident in Act III., Scene 1, of *Measure for Measure*:

"Nay, sweet sister, more slander would infame
Your spotless life, to reave your brother's breath,
When you have power to enlarge the same,
Once in your hand doth lie my life and death.
Weigh that I am the self-same flesh you are,
Think I once gone the house will go to wrack;
Know forcèd faults for slanders need not care;
Look you for blame if I fail through your lack.
Consider well my great extremity.
If otherwise this doom I could revoke
I would not spare, for any jeopardy
To free thee, wench, from this same heavy yoke."

A comparison between these lines and Shakspere's will show how Whetstone, although writing accurate verse, is yet hampered in expression by the necessities of the metre. Shakspere, as always, has the versification entirely in his own power, and handles the metre as the subject demands.

Kyd and Lyly, who followed Gascoigne and his contemporaries, were of quite a different stamp. They were both touched

by the three influences which have been spoken of, while Sackville, Gascoigne, and Whetstone were influenced by only one.

Of Thomas Kyd personally nothing is known. His plays are sanguinary and horrible; examples of the *Titus Andronicus* kind, from the method of which even Marlowe never got entirely free. Kyd used in his tragedy of *Jeronimo* a mixture of rhyme and blank verse; though at the time he wrote, it was not agreed as to which of the two the tragic drama should definitely use. Marlowe decided this in 1587, when he adopted blank verse in his play of *Tamburlaine*.

John Lyly wrote eight plays, all comedies, and all dealing with bright and light themes in a fantastic way. *Mother Bombie*, acted by the children of Paul's shows distinct traces of the influence of Plautus and Terence. His lyrical power enlivened his dramas in a wonderful manner. The song from *Alexander and Campaspe* is famous:

"Cupid and my Campaspe played
At cards for kisses—Cupid paid.
He stakes his quiver, bows, and arrows,
His mother's doves and team of sparrows:
Loses them, too; then down he throws
The coral of his lips, the rose
Growing on's cheek (but none knows how),
With these, the crystal of his brow,
And then, the dimple of his chin—
All these did my Campaspe win.
At last, he set her both his eyes—
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
Oh, love, has she done this to thee?
What shall, alas! become of me?"

Only one of his eight plays was written in verse; the other seven were all in prose; and it was by reason of his bold adoption of Gascoigne's innovation that he rendered yeoman's service to the English drama. Lyly showed how it was possible to use prose for a vivacious and amusing dialogue; and though his style was affected, the ridicule which he brought upon himself did not prevent those who came after him from benefiting by his example. When we are delighted with the wit and fancy, the humour and the fun of some comic scene of Shakspere or Ben Jonson, we should not forget how much Lyly's contemporaries, and notably Shakspere, were indebted to him.

36. The Final Development of the Drama. Peele, Greene, Lodge, Nash, and Marlowe.

The final development of the drama includes the work of Peele, Greene, and Marlowe. For the first time the emotions of the human heart, and the results brought about by them,

are shown with real dramatic effect. Peele was educated at Oxford; and, on every occasion, displayed his knowledge of classics by constant quotation. His best plays are *The Arraignement of Paris, The Chronicle of Edward the First, The Old Wives' Tale,* and *David and Bethsabe. The Arraignement of Paris,* a pretty play, turns on the impeachment of Paris before Zeus for giving the apple to Venus. He uses in it a variety of metres; the fourteen-syllable rhyming line, the heroic couple, various lyrical measures, and some blank verse. He brings in the Fates, making them speak in Latin; and puts an Italian song into the mouth of Helen of Troy. In a passage of the play Diana refers the contest to Queen Elizabeth, before whom the entertainment was being given. The lines she speaks are good examples of Peele's smooth blank verse:

"There wones within these pleasant shady woods,
Where neither storm nor sun's distemperature
Have power to hurt by cruel heat or cold,
Under the climate of the milder Heaven,
Where seldom lights Jove's angry thunderbolt,
For favour of that sovereign earthly peer,
Where whistling winds make music 'mong the trees,
Far from disturbance of our country gods,
Amid the cypress springs, a gracious nymph,
That honours Dian for her chastity,
And likes the labours well of Phœbe's groves.
Her place Elysium hight, and of the place,
Her name that governs there *Eliza* is;
A kingdom that may well compare with mine,
An ancient seat of kings, a second Troy,
Is compassed round with a commodious sea."

Wones, dwells.

Edward the First is interesting, since it marks the stage of development that had been reached in the improvement from the old Chronicle History plays to the historical dramas of Shakspere. The *Old Wives' Tale* is a most amusing farcical play, valuable again because it gave a suggestion to Milton, which he made use of in *Comus. David and Bethsabe* probably shows the best of Peele's work. It is full of the beautiful smooth blank verse, in which he so excelled; as, for example, in the speech of David when Bethsabe enters the court:

"Now comes my lover tripping like the roe,
And brings my longing tangled in her hair.
To 'joy her love, I'll build a kingly bower,
Seated in hearing of a hundred streams,
That, for their homage to her sovereign joys,
Shall, as the serpents fold into their nests,
In oblique turnings, wind their nimble waves
About the circles of her curious walks;

To 'joy, to enjoy.

And with their murmur summon easeful sleep,
To lay his golden sceptre on her brows.
Open the doors, and entertain my love;
Open, I say, and as you open, sing
Welcome, fair Bethsabe, King David's darling."

Greene was educated at both Oxford and Cambridge, a usual plan in the sixteenth century. He travelled in Italy; and returned to London, intending to live by his pen. He stands first among the Elizabethan novelists, who, following in the lead of the Spanish and Italian writers of fiction, produced a number of wonderfully realistic, and sometimes romantic, stories. He was fluent in his writing, quick in imagination, and gifted with a great sense of humour. His poetry was excellent, as were his plays; but he lived a worthless life, and in his thirty-second year died a painful death. Here are two pretty specimens of his verse:

The Shepherd's Wife's Song.

(From *The Mourning Garment.*)

"Ah, what is love? It is a pretty thing,
As sweet unto a shepherd as a king;
And sweeter too,
For kings have cares that wait upon a crown,
And cares can make the sweetest love to frown:
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

"His flocks are folded, he comes home at night,
As merry as a king in his delight;
And merrier too,
For kings bethink them what the state require,
Where shepherds careless carol by the fire:
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

"He kisseth first, then sits as blithe to eat
His cream and curds, as doth the king his meat;
And blither too,
For kings have often fears when they do sup,
Where shepherds dread no poison in their cup:
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain? . . .

"Upon his couch of straw he sleeps as sound,
As doth the king upon his beds of down;
More sounder too,
For cares cause kings full oft their sleep to spill,
Where weary shepherds lie and snore their fill:
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

"Thus with his wife he spends the year, as blithe
As doth the king at every tide or sith;
And blither too,
For kings have wars and broils to take in hand,
When shepherds laugh and love upon the land:
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain.
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?"

The Description of Silvestro's Lady.

(From *Morando, the Tritameron of Love.*)

"Her stature like the tall straight cedar trees,
Whose stately bulks do fame the Arabian groves;
A pace like princely Juno when she braved
The Queen of love, 'fore Paris in the vale;
A front beset with love and courtesy;
A face like modest Pallas when she blushed
A seely shepherd should be beauty's judge;
A lip sweet ruby-red, graced with delight;
A cheek wherein for interchange of hue
A wrangling strife 'twixt lily and the rose;
Her eyes two twinkling stars in winter nights,
When chilling frost doth clear the azured sky;
Her hair of golden hue doth dim the beams
That proud Apollo giveth from his coach. . . .

"A foot like Thetis when she tripped the sands
To steal Neptunus' favour with her steps;
In fine, a piece despite of beauty framed,
To see what Nature's cunning could afford."

Seely, ignorant.

Neither Thomas Lodge nor Thomas Nash, had much standing as playwrights, although they took a considerable part in forming the drama before Shakspere's time. They were both of them quick and clever pamphleteers. One of Lodge's first attempts at writing was an answer to Gosson's *School of Abuse*; and his prose-romance *Rosalind*, gave Shakspere the material for *As You Like It.* In later life, he became a physician and devoted his pen to graver works: translations of Josephus and Seneca, and an original *Treatise of the Plague.*

Nash wrote a few plays, one of which, the *Isle of Dogs*, is now lost; it secured for its author the reward of imprisonment. His prose writings were numerous, and very varied in their subjects. The best of them is *Pierce Penniless*, in which he gave a more or less true account of his own exploits. Like many Elizabethan writers, he died young. Literature was too often a synonym of "fame, poverty, quarrels, imprisonment, and an early death."

Christopher Marlowe was the one dramatist of all this band who really stood on a footing different from the rest. Marlowe was born in Canterbury, of parents in very humble circum-

stances; but his education at King's School was so well appreciated by him that he was able to pass on to Cambridge. He began to write about 1585, and produced, in quick succession, the dramas of *Tamburlaine*, *Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, and *Edward the Second*. He was killed at Deptford, in a tavern brawl, being only in the thirtieth year of his age. He seems to have lived a hand-to-mouth and disreputable life in London; and it is known that proceedings would have been taken against him on a charge of atheism, had not his death prevented it.

Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* was the first play that was written in blank verse for public performance. *Gorboduc* had been in similar verse; but it was academic in character, and intended only for a private audience. *Tamburlaine* is remarkable for its poetic and literary merits; and the extravagance of language and mad energy, which otherwise mar it, were supposed to have been put in to make the blank verse sound as effective to the public as the accustomed rhyme did. Like all Marlowe's plays, *Tamburlaine* illustrates one ruling passion, which in this case was the hunger for universal dominion. From being "a Scythian shepherd, by his wonderful conquests, he became a puissant and most mighty monarch." At seventeen he managed the flocks and herds of his family; but he was of noble descent, and entering into a soldier's life, he extended his conquests over Persia, Georgia, Tartary, Russia, India, and Syria. He established his capital at Samaskand, where "he displayed, in a short repose, his magnificence and power." He died, in 1405, on his march to the conquest of China. In the same way *Faustus* shows the struggle of a human being to obtain knowledge and pleasure without labour and without control; the *Jew of Malta*, which gave Shakspere suggestions for the *Merchant of Venice*, is a study of greed and passion; and *Edward the Second*, the first great historical play in English, depicts the misery of weakness, and the agony of a king's ruin.

The plays are worked out consistently to their ends, and the characters are clearly and distinctly drawn. The poetry of Marlowe's lines is full of weakness and of strength, and betrays, in the extravagance of its language, the nature of the life which he had let himself come to lead. The music of its verse, which is all his own, and is taken from no one else, found an echo in the wonderful harmonies of Milton. It was Marlowe who was the true guide to Shakspere, and set an example which led the greater poet into the right way of work. Before Marlowe there had been neither genuine blank verse nor genuine tragedy. When he had shown the world what could be done, the harvest was reaped by Shakspere.

Tamburlaine.

"Of stature tall, and straightly fashionèd,
Like his desire, lift upwards and divine;
So large of limbs, his joints so strongly knit,
Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly bear
Old Atlas' burden; 'twixt, his manly pitch,
A pearl more worth than all the world, is placed,
Wherein by curious sovereignty of art
Are fixed his piercing instruments of sight,
Whose fiery circles bear encompassèd
A heaven of heavenly bodies in their spheres,
That guides his steps and actions to the throne,
Where honour sits invested royally;
Pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion,
Thirsting with sovereignty and love of arms;
His lofty brows in folds do figure death,
And in their smoothness amity and life;
About them hangs a knot of amber hair,
Wrappèd in curls, as fierce Achilles' was,
On which the breath of heaven delights to play,
Making it dance with wanton majesty;
His arms and fingers long and sinewy,
Betokening valour and excess of strength;
In every part proportioned like the man
Should make the world subdued to Tamburlaine."

Tamburlaine at Zenocrate's Death Bed.

"*Tamb.* What, is she dead? Techelles, draw thy sword
And wound the earth, that it may cleave in twain,
And we descend into the infernal vaults,
To hale the Fatal Sisters by the hair,
And throw them in the triple moat of hell,
For taking hence my fair Zenocrate.
Casane and Theridamas, to arms!
Raise cavalieros higher than the clouds,
And with the cannon break the frame of heaven;
Batter the shining palace of the sun,
And shiver all the starry firmament,
For amorous Jove hath snatched my love from hence,
Meaning to make her stately queen of heaven.
What god soever holds thee in his arms,
Giving thee nectar and ambrosia,
Behold me here, divine Zenocrate,
Raving, impatient, desperate, and mad,
Breaking my steelèd lance, with which I burst
The rusty beams of Janus' temple-doors,
Letting out Death and tyrannising War,
To march with me under this bloody flag!
And, if thou pitiest Tamburlaine the Great,
Come down from heaven, and live with me again!
Ther. Ah, good my lord, be patient! she is dead,
And all this raging cannot make her live.

Zenocrate, wife of Tamburlaine.

If words might serve, our voice hath rent the air;
If tears, our eyes have watered all the earth;
If grief, our murdered hearts have strained forth blood:
Nothing prevails, for she is dead, my lord.
Tamb. 'For she is dead!' thy words do pierce my soul:
Ah, sweet Theridamas, say so no more!
Though she be dead, yet let me think she lives,
And feed my mind that dies for want of her.
Where'er her soul be, thou [*To the body*] shalt stay with me,
Embalmed with cassia, ambergris, and myrrh,
Not lapt in lead, but in a sheet of gold,
And, till I die, thou shalt not be interred.
Then in as rich a tomb as Mausolus'
We both will rest, and have one epitaph
Writ in as many several languages
As I have conquered kingdoms with my sword.
This cursèd town will I consume with fire,
Because this place bereft me of my love;
The houses, burnt, will look as if they mourned;
And here will I set up her statuë,
And march about it with my mourning camp,
Drooping and pining for Zenocrate."

Theridamas, Techelles, Casane, his sons, kings of Argiers, Fez, and Morocco.

Mausolus, King of Caria, who died 353 B.C. His widow, Artemisia, erected over his tomb a monument known as the Mausoleum, which became one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Statuë (3 syllables, old French), statue.

HERO.

"At Sestos Hero dwelt; Hero the fair,
Whom young Apollo courted for her hair,
And offered as a dower his burning throne
Where she should sit, for men to gaze upon.
The outside of her garments were of lawn,
The lining, purple silk, with gilt stars drawn; . . .
Upon her head she wore a myrtle wreath
From whence her veil reached to the ground beneath:
Her veil was artificial flowers and leaves,
Whose workmanship both man and beast deceives.
Many would praise the sweet smell as she past,
When 'twas the odour which her breath forth cast;
And there for honey bees have sought in vain,
And, beat from thence, have lighted there again.
About her neck hung chains of pebble-stone,
Which, lightened by her neck, like diamonds shone.
She ware no gloves; for neither sun nor wind
Would burn or parch her hands, but, to her mind,
Or warm or cool them, for they took delight
To play upon those hands, they were so white.
Buskins of shells, all silvered, usèd she,
And branched with blushing coral to the knee;

Ware, wore.

Where sparrows perched, of hollow pearl and gold,
Such as the world would wonder to behold:
Those with sweet water oft her handmaid fills,
Which, as she went, would chirrup through the bills.
Some say, for her the fairest Cupid pined,
And, looking in her face was strooken blind.
But this is true; so like was one the other,
As he imagined Hero was his mother;
And oftentimes into her bosom flew, . . .
And laid his childish head upon her breast,
And, with still panting rock, there took his rest,
So lovely fair was Hero, Venus' nun."

Strooken, stricken.

X. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE.

37. Incidents of Shakspere's Life.

Shakspere was born in 1564, at the little country town of Stratford-on-Avon, where his father, John Shakspere, was then living in tolerably comfortable circumstances. During William's boyhood, misfortune fell on the Shakspere family, and John Shakspere had to sell some land which his wife had brought him, and to raise money on other property which he owned in the district. William is said to have been a pupil at the Stratford Grammar School until he was about fifteen. Then he had to leave, and take such work as he could get, in order to help his parents. In his nineteenth year, he is supposed to have made an unhappy marriage; though of the actual circumstances, little is known. His wife, Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a well-to-do German, was his senior by eight years. Either his own poverty, due to a rapidly-growing family, or his father's distress, which was very acute in 1585 and 1586, compelled him, two years later, to go up to London, leaving his wife and children behind. He was twenty-two when he took his departure from Stratford.

Of his early experiences in London very little is known; yet he seems to have got quickly into touch with the dramatic world. He apparently did his first work for the theatres by altering the play of *Titus Andronicus* during the year that he arrived. *Love's Labour's Lost* and the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* belong to 1591; the *Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and the *Third Part of Henry the Sixth* succeeded. In 1592 the first certain reference that we have to Shakspere appears in Robert Greene's *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*. This pamphlet, written by its unhappy author upon his death-bed, and published by his executor, William Chettle, warned all fellow-authors against putting any trust

in players. Greene speaks peevishly of Shakspere as "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his

'Tyger's heart, wrapt in a player's hide,'

supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes Factotum*, is, in his owne conceit, the onely Shake-scene in the country." The explanation is that Shakspere had re-written one of Greene's plays, the *True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of York*, and turned it, with omissions and new passages, into the *Third Part of Henry the Sixth*. He preserved one line of Greene's

"Oh, tyger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide,"

and Greene, in his pamphlet, parodied this into his bitter sneer.

The reason for such an attack was probably that Lyly, Greene, Marlowe, and Peele were all University men, who formed a clique which had got the writing for the London stage entirely into its own hands. It was annoying to them that a raw youth from the country, with no cultivation except that of his natural ability, should come into their midst, and take away some portion of their livelihood. That Shakspere was not regarded in the same light by all his contemporaries, is, however, shown by the testimony of Chettle, Greene's executor, who issued a pamphlet in December, 1592, entitled *Kind-Hart's Dream*. When speaking of Shakspere, he refers to him as one "whome at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had. . . . I am as sory as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because myselfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill, than he exelent in the qualitie he professes; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty and his facetious grace in writing, that aproves his art."

The "divers of worship," by which Chettle means various people of importance, showed themselves practical friends very quickly. To one of them, the Earl of Southampton, Shakspere dedicated, in the year after Greene's death, his earliest published poem, *Venus and Adonis*. This work Shakspere speaks of in his dedication as "the first heire of my invention," and refers regretfully to his "unpolished lines." There is every reason for believing that the Earl helped Shakspere both socially and materially. To him again, Shakspere dedicated his second poem, the *Rape of Lucrece*, which was finished just a year after the first. The phrases employed in the dedication of this work are a grateful recognition of many kindnesses, worded in a far more intimate manner than had been ventured upon in the dedication of the *Venus and Adonis*.

Qualitie, a word specially used at the time for the actor's profession.
Facetious, felicitous, or happy.

In 1593 Shakspere had appeared twice before the Queen, in the Lord Chamberlain's company of players. He was at the time, and for some years after, busily at work upon his historical plays and his earlier comedies; and was fortunate enough to lay by money sufficient to render great assistance to his family. His father, John Shakspere, applied for a grant of coat armour in 1596; and in the following year this grant was issued by the Garter King-of-Arms. In that same year Shakspere's only son, Hamnet, died; and his hope of founding a family was shattered, even though he might recover the estate. In 1597 he bought a good house, known as New Place, in Stratford; and had the gratification of seeing his plays printed, a sure token of their popularity. Two years later he was wealthy enough to become a partner in the Globe Theatre, and to invest more money in his native town. He was the owner, in Stratford, of a considerable amount of corn and malt; and in London his name is preserved as being assessed on property in the parish of St. Helen's, Bishopgate.

In 1589 he acted in the first performance of Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*; and, in the same year, his friend Francis Meres wrote of him, in his *Wit's Treasury*, "The sweete wittie soule of Ovid lives in mellifluous and hony-tongued Shakspere."

A remarkable change in the whole of his life had taken place. From being a poor and struggling man, he was now well-to-do, and relieved from the constant worry of poverty. He had made his name; he was sought by the highest and most cultivated persons in the land. To his old friendship with the Earl of Southampton he could now add that of the Earl of Essex, as well as that of William Herbert, Lord Pembroke. The Queen herself was very kind to him, and in the world of letters he was supreme king. The work of his younger days had always been marked by a cheerfulness, a delight in everything that was beautiful, a thorough enjoyment of all the pleasures of life. These qualities by no means deserted Shakspere as he came to advance in years, and entered into middle life. Then they were strengthened by a more accurate knowledge of men, and by a deeper insight into their nature. This was distinctly shown in the results he achieved with his historical writings; where, as it has been pointed out, his vivid imagination was employed in the compressing of great masses of history, and so obtained a strength and power it had not possessed before; while, at the same time, Shakspere came to realize that the real concerns of life, as they touched a man's nature in his struggle for existence, were more valuable to work upon than the conceits and affectations and mere frivolities

which had attracted him most in his earlier years. Shakspere never lost the brightness and sweetness belonging to his younger days; and was able to add to it a sense of gravity which showed him to be cognizant of the real responsibilities of life.

Suddenly, came a time of danger and sorrow. His friends were lost; for Essex was executed in 1601; Southampton was imprisoned; Pembroke was forbidden the court. Shakspere found himself one who "had gained his experience, and whose experience had made him sad." *Hamlet*, in 1602, marks the middle point of the growth of Shakspere's genius; we can almost see him standing silently apart, watching the changing world. *Julius Cæsar*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*, all belong, with *Hamlet*, to this grave and serious period. It had no effect of diminishing the sweetness of Shakspere's mind, or in removing from him his belief in the ultimate good of mankind; it never made him a sceptic or an unbeliever; it only caused him to become more grave and earnest, as he realized how many suffered from the consequences of their sins.

It was succeeded by another period, when his mind was full of gentleness and forgiveness, and of a sympathy rather than a scorn for human weakness. He set an example afterwards followed by his great contemporary, Bacon, of leaving the world, and the dwellers in an evil time behind him, and in spending his last days in the quietude of the country. It is said, though not on good authority, that there had been a misunderstanding of many years between Shakspere and his wife; the wound, if ever it existed, was by this time quite healed. Among his last plays, *The Tempest*, *Cymbeline*, and the *Winter's Tale*, all speak of peace and of the vanity of mortal things. Shakspere had learnt the great lesson of "the need of repentance and the duty of forgiveness," and could look upon humanity with a sympathetic tenderness akin to pity.

He gave up his London life in 1612, and, going back to Stratford, lived quietly in his house there for four years more. He died in 1616, being only fifty-two years of age.

38. The first period of Shakspere's work.

The publication of Shakspere's plays began in 1597, and between that year and the year of his death there were many quarto editions of separate ones issued, often without the author's sanction, and consequently in a very imperfect state. Seven years after his death, two men named Heminge and Condell, who had both been fellow-actors with Shakspere, collected and published what they hoped was a complete and accurate edition. This is the famous First Folio, and contains

all those plays usually passed under Shakspere's name, with the exception of *Pericles*, which was not printed until the Third Folio of 1664.

The exact order of Shakspere's work is certainly not known. The careful labours of editors and commentators have done much to clear up difficult points; though it is hardly possible to go further than to regard the plays as falling into four distinct groups. These groups illustrate the chief periods of Shakspere's literary life. The first occupies the years from 1588 to about 1595. In the earlier part of the time there seem to be traces of his work in various old plays, when he was teaching himself the mysteries of his craft, by trying to amend their faults. The best instance we can definitely fix upon is the *Titus Andronicus*, a melodramatic and sanguinary drama, very popular in London at the time when Shakspere first arrived there. Shakspere saw that the taste of the time was too strong to permit any change in the nature of the play; and he improved it to a considerable extent by adding "some master-touches to one or two of the principal parts." After an interval, for which little record of his work exists, he seems to have been concerned with a revision of *Henry the Sixth, Part I.*, the main portion of which had been done by Marlowe, Greene, and Peele. Shakspere is held now not to be responsible for the coarse scenes of the bad treatment given to Joan of Arc. On the other hand, the famous scene, the fourth of the second act, when Plantagenet plucks the white rose, and Somerset the red, is generally acknowledged to be his. The greater part of Act IV., and especially the scene between the Talbots, are Shakspere's again. This revised or amended version appeared about 1591; it was followed, a year or two later, by the second and third parts, based on the contention between the houses of Lancaster and York. It is believed that these two plays were the work of Marlowe and Greene, possibly Peele as well; and that they were revised by Shakspere, to whom are due the story of the Queen's love for Suffolk, and the growth of the various factions, with their ceaseless quarrels. The powerful treatment of these passages seems to be essentially Shaksperian. The central interests of *Henry the Sixth, Part III.*, are the character of Queen Margaret, with the horrible scene of her mockery of York, and the first study of crook-backed Richard, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III. Over this play, Greene made his attack upon Shakspere.

It has been declared by some critics that Shakspere's *Richard III.*, 1594, is probably only a re-casting of a previous drama. Professor Dowden more wisely suggests that the whole play was written by Shakspere, under the influence and in the manner of

Marlowe, the great master of dramatic verse. The entire play of *Richard the Third* may be said to be the exhibition of one central character: all subordinate persons are created that he may wreak his will upon them. This is quite in the manner of Marlowe. Like Marlowe also is the fierce energy of the central character—the want of moral restraint, the heaping up of violent deeds, the broad and bold touches, and the demoniac force and intensity of the whole.

We pass now from the plays in which the work was possibly not all Shakspere's own, to the others of the period which are undeniably his. About 1594, *Richard the Second* was written, wherein is told the story of Richard's misgovernment, and of Bolingbroke's usurpation. The colour is not so pronounced as in *Richard the Third*, yet the characters are far more subtly drawn. The interest of the play centres in the personal character of the rivals, Richard's bad government leading up to, and almost justifying Bolingbroke's interference. In the early scenes, stress is laid upon the murder of Richard's uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, who was said to have died a natural death during his captivity in Mowbray's hands at Calais. It was generally supposed that he had been put to death by Mowbray on Richard's orders. Bolingbroke therefore, in bringing a charge against Mowbray, was virtually doing the same thing against Richard, and the nation quickly saw that the king was not only oppressing them, but had caused a mean act of violence to be committed upon one of his own kin. His foreign favourites, his blank charters, and his farming out of estates, all tended to irritate the people; and the feeling that the quarrel between him and Bolingbroke was a national one rather than a personal, is intensified in the play by Hereford's declaration of his nationality, and by Gaunt's famous speech upon England.

Richard has about him a natural charm which softens down many of his short-comings, though he is essentially deficient in all real manliness. He is a sensitive man, and therefore self-indulgent, greatly attracted by anything with pathos or passion attached to it; yet he is wanting in strong nerve, and is incapable of fixed purpose and of sustained action. Bolingbroke, on the other hand, is specially fitted for the winning of worldly success. He can see his aim from far, and has strength enough to push aside all obstacles until he can attain it. He is not naturally cruel, still he will never shrink from any deed that stands in the way of the accomplishment of his desires. The whole play is remarkable for the contrast so skilfully drawn between the man of action and the man of feeling and words. It is a pleasure to notice that work so good as this is the characteristic feature of Shakspere's first entirely original

historical play. These two plays were not published until 1597.

How fresh and vivid was Shakspere's imagination is proved by the comedies belonging to this time, which show no trace of any other hand. The first is *Love's Labour's Lost*, the plot apparently Shakspere's own invention. It is a bright, gay play, full of jests and merriment, abounding in witty dialogue —a forerunner of the brilliant talk of Beatrice and Benedick in *Much Ado about Nothing*. The plot is simple, and suits the purpose of the play. Ferdinand, King of Navarre, determines to hide from the world with his friends, Biron, Dumain, and Longaville. They pledge themselves that they "will not see ladies; study, fast; not sleep." They are interrupted in their retreat by the Princess of France and her three attendants, with whom the "recluses" at once fall in love, while each shrinks from betraying his weakness to the others. The end can easily be imagined. There are some pretty pieces of social satire, taking off the affectations of Holofernes, the schoolmaster; Sir Nathaniel, the curate; and a "refined traveller from Spain," with his "fire-new words." The Euphuists, also, are held up to ridicule. The songs and verses scattered through the play are charming, and full of the pleasantest conceits.

Shakspere followed this play up with a brilliant farce, the *Comedy of Errors*, adapting the plot from a story told by Plautus. To the comic part he added a tale of the danger and sorrow of the sea. A much higher note was struck later on in the lovely *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, a tale of fairy-land, with love-troubles, and a pretty touch of pathos running through the whole. The wonderful mixture to be found in it, of mediaeval fairy-tale, classical legend, and English clown life belongs to Shakspere alone. That which in the hands of any other writer would have seemed incongruous and irritating, by him is blended into one delightful whole.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona, founded on a Spanish romance, is a comedy relating the friendship of Proteus and Valentine, the "two gentlemen"; of its severance by lover's treacheries; and of its reunion by the repentance of the deceiver. The play is weak in places, for the story is poor, and the finish sudden and unnatural. The real interest of the play lies in its first studies of characters which Shakspere afterwards completely developed. Launce, perhaps, is perfect—a wonderful specimen of Shakspere's humour at its best; but Julia gives us a suggestion of Helena in *All's Well that Ends Well*, and of Viola in *Twelfth Night*. Silvia, above all, suggests Juliet, and leads the way from Shakspere's love-comedies to his first and greatest love-tragedy.

The plot of this tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*, is very slight. The scene is laid at Verona, a city at that time distracted with the feuds of rival nobles, the Capulets and Montagues. Young Romeo, a scion of the house of Montague, smitten at first with love of Rosaline, soon finds that what he deemed passion is a mere fleeting fancy. He learns what true love means, when he comes to know Juliet, a daughter of the Capulets. His love is returned by Juliet, more passionately still; and they marry secretly, paying no heed to the enmity of their kinsfolk. Immediately after the marriage, Romeo is banished to Mantua, for having been concerned in the slaying of a Capulet; and Juliet's parents, ignorant of her wedding, insist upon her accepting a Count Paris as her husband. Juliet, therefore, on the eve of this proposed marriage swallows a medicine, bringing on a trance, which makes her appear to be dead. The only person who knows the secret is a Friar, to whom she appealed for help, and who provided her with the opiate. Her parents believing her to be lifeless, order her body to be laid in the family vault; and the Friar instantly sends to Romeo at Mantua, to tell him what has happened. A rumour of Juliet's death has, however, reached Romeo, who, determined to end his own life beside her dead body, provides himself with poison. Regardless of any risk of breaking his banishment, he rushes back to Verona, where, on entering the Capulets' vault, he finds Juliet's apparently dead body. In an agony beyond endurance, he drinks the poison and dies upon her tomb. She recovers soon after from the effects of the drug, and seeing the corpse beside her, snatches the dagger from his girdle, and, stabbing herself, falls lifeless upon his body.

In this play Shakspere showed that he had gained control of a full tragic power, for the innocence of love stands out boldly among the strifes and feuds of those who are past its influence. The remorse of the bereaved parents is just acknowledgment that their hard-heartedness had caused the whole misfortune:

> *Capulet.* "O brother Montague, give me thy hand,
> This is my daughter's jointure, for no more
> Can I demand.
> *Montague.* But I can give thee more:
> For I will raise her statue in pure gold;
> That while Verona by the name is known,
> There shall no figure at that rate be set
> As that of true and faithful Juliet.
> *Capulet.* As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie;
> Poor sacrifices of our enmity!"

With these plays of love and passion should be grouped the poems already referred to—*Venus and Adonis*, and the *Rape of Lucrece*. The first tells, in gorgeous verse, of the passion of the goddess, and of her inconsolable grief at the death of the

beautiful youth from the thrust of the boar. The second poem relates the notorious crime of Tarquin, in which many a line "surprises by a fine excess." The metre is more elaborate than that of *Venus and Adonis*, which had been written in a six-lined stanza. *Lucrece* is in the seven-lined stanza so often used by Chaucer. Shakspere obtained his ideas for the poem from the *Complaint of Rosamond*, written by Samuel Daniel, who was strongly influenced by the Italian school.

The date of *King John* is uncertain; it is possibly a play of the first period; the death of Shakspere's only son, Hamnet, in 1596, has led many scholars to think that the revision of the play must not be dated until that year, since it seems as if his own fatherly sorrow expressed itself in the lamentation of the Duchess of Brittany for her son. The French king says brutally to her, when he hears her weeping, "You are as fond of grief as of your child," a sneer to which Constance replies:

> "Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
> Lies in his bed; walks up and down with me,
> Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
> Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
> Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form;
> Then have I reason to be fond of grief!"

Shakspere's sources of material were the *Chronicles* and an old play called the *Troublesome Reign of John*, by an author unknown. Faulconbridge is put before us as a perfect picture of a frank, vigorous Englishman, proud of his country, reliant on himself, detesting everything that was mean and base. He shows distinct traces of the character of his supposed father. A personality such as Faulconbridge's is developed in the subtle picture of Henry the Fifth, the hero of the play of that name. A comparison of the two is not only an instructive study of the progress made by Shakspere in his work; it is a remarkable instance of the little differences that he could conceive and depict between two men who were so much alike.

Certain characteristics mark these early poems and plays of Shakspere. In the plays rhymed verse is at first preferred to blank verse. *Love's Labour's Lost* has nearly twice as many rhymed as unrhymed lines, and in several passages the lines rhyme in stanza form. Gradually Shakspere discards rhyme, perhaps by the advice of Marlowe, for in *Richard III.*, written probably under Marlowe's direction, versed rhyme holds a very insignificant place.

It is interesting to notice the influence of two fellow-dramatists upon Shakspere in his earliest days. His first tragedies clearly show him as a faithful disciple of Marlowe: *Richard III.* in many respects resembling *Tamburlaine*; and *Richard the Second*

being clearly suggested by *Edward the Second*. In much the same way, the dialogue of the comedies followed Lyly, in its antithesis and quaint conceits. Even in dealing with mythological or fairy stories, and still more with heroines in male attire, Shakspere learnt much from Lyly. Shakspere, however, improved on all that he borrowed; and was never a mere plagiarist.

39. Shakspere's Second Period.

The work belonging to the second period of Shakspere's career is remarkably wide in its nature, comprising a great out burst of historical plays, four charming comedies, the sonnets, and two other plays of unequal value. We will take them as near as possible in a chronological order, and give a brief summary of each.

The *Merchant of Venice*, in 1596, was the first of the famous comedies, new in their kind, to which Shakspere turned his attention. He made use in it of material that he had previously employed in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and in diction and versification returned to the work of his earlier days. But he never before had dealt so successfully with the development of plot, or the delineation of character, nor had he ever given such distinct portraits to each individual. The humour, as well, was different from that which he had previously used; it proceeded naturally in the *Merchant of Venice* from the course of events, and was not brought in merely for the sake of creating merriment. The result is one of the most beautiful and touching dramatic poems in English literature.

The story is nothing new, for it is found in Greek romance, in Italian tales, in the *Cursor Mundi*, in Gower, and in many other writers. The original part is Shakspere's creation of Shylock, and his treatment of the characters. The central idea is a study of the various ways in which men of different temperaments meet with the vicissitudes of life. Though the play is called after the Merchant, Antonio is not the chief person in the drama; he is rather the central point round which the others assemble. Of these, Bassanio represents the friend, Shylock the enemy, and Portia the one who acts as guardian angel. Shylock follows his prey with avidity and skill. Bassanio defends Antonio in a brusque, manly way. Perfectly honourable in words and ideas, he is not a sufficiently able man to meet an emergency. Portia, acting purely on the impulse of the moment, plays her difficult part with decision and intellectual skill. Her power is strengthened rather than hindered by her tenderness and susceptibility of feeling. Her husband's unwillingness to part with the ring she gave him, pleases her more than she

cares to say. It delights her, too, to find the man she loves, faithful and true to the man who has long loved him.

The historical part of the second group of plays may be taken to begin with *Henry the Fourth*, Parts 1 and 2, and *Henry the Fifth*, three plays which contain "all the wit of the world, mixed with noble history." The wit is represented by the inimitable Falstaff; the history is the account of Henry the Fourth's struggle with his barons, and of the misunderstanding and reconciliation with his son. *Henry the Fifth*, the concluding play of the three, is a song of pure patriotism caused by the pride felt by Elizabethan England at the defeat of Spain.

Henry the Fourth consists of a mass of history and comedy blended together. The hero of the history is the king himself; the hero of the comedy is Falstaff; while Prince Henry acts as a connecting link between the two. Henry the Fourth is the Bolingbroke whom Shakspere had so well depicted in *Richard the Second*. Henry, in the play called by his name, has passed his full manhood, and is worn out with toil and trouble and with all the anxieties and dangers of his reign. His nobles have been a source of constant worry. They have yielded neither to force of arms, nor to flattery; the princes of Scotland and of Wales, and the lords of the north, are always his foes. It is one of Shakspere's greatest achievements that he casts a pathetic shade over the figure of the king, and makes us realize the hopelessness of a man who knows that he can have no peace till death.

The character of Falstaff stands upon a very different footing. He is a man of the grossest life and habits, coarse in his appearance, "a tun of flesh," untruthful in his speech, cowardly in his actions, wanting entirely in self-respect. Yet it is impossible to read or to listen to *Henry the Fourth* without a feeling for Falstaff which approaches actual affection. He appeals to us in so powerful a manner chiefly because he possesses a genuine sense of humour. If he is caught in doing wrong, he is the first to laugh at himself for being so foolish as to be found out. At the same time, he is seldom caught. When things are blackest against him, then is he most likely to obtain a victory; when it seems least possible for him to clear himself, he breaks boldly away from his adversaries' clutches. We feel that more than half of the apparent wickedness of Falstaff is unreal, and that he assumed it merely because it served his purposes. To detect the follies of other people, and to let them know that he had seen them, was the joy of Falstaff's heart. Men like Prince Henry, themselves keen judges of character, appreciated Falstaff's skill. Only the exigencies of a throne made it impossible for Henry to continue the friendship; and

Falstaff, in spite of his protest, would have been one of the first to understand the reason why.

A strong contrast is drawn between Prince Henry and Hotspur. In order to make the picture more complete, the latter is spoken of as being much younger than he really was. The distinctive points of his character are, however, carefully delineated. His quick temper and strong sense of personal dignity made him look upon many trivial things as matters of great importance. He was a brave and a gallant man, but believed himself to be always in the right. Prince Henry, with a colder nature, could control his temper in a manner impossible for Hotspur. He did not trouble over slight injuries to his dignity. He knew that he possessed the dignity, and that it was unnecessary to notice a person so ignorant as to offend it. He affected a careless and even a seemingly useless life; while underneath lay a constant and steady purpose, which he never neglected when once he had become king. He stands before us as a model of honour and uprightness, doing his best to live up to the great aim he had set before himself. Shakspere strikes the true note of Henry's character in the scene which depicts him at his father's bedside.

Between the second part of *Henry the Fourth* and *Henry the Fifth* Shakspere appears to have written a play which, according to a not very reliable tradition, was asked for by Queen Elizabeth. The Queen is said to have desired to see Falstaff in love; a play, at any rate, was produced which showed Sir John brought into all sorts of ridiculous mishaps by reason of his greed and self-conceit. His cleverness and humour were entirely denied to him; his huge size and his name were all that was left of the Falstaff of *Henry the Fourth*. There is no reason or excuse in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* to account for his follies; he is simply a bare-faced rascal, and an unsuccessful one. The scenes in which the pretty Anne Page appears are almost out of place in such surroundings.

Something of the coarse merriment that can be found in the *Merry Wives* was repeated in the *Taming of the Shrew*, a play generally considered to have been retouched by Shakspere from other people's work. His share is thought to be limited to the sketch of the Shrew, Katharina, a woman whose implacable temper can only be checked by the apparently more savage temperament of her husband. The real difference between the two is that Katharina means to be ill-tempered, while Petruchio assumes his wrath in order to gain an advantage.

Much Ado about Nothing, the second comedy of the four, is best described by its title. A man of contemptible character spreads a slander about an innocent girl, and a tragic situation

is reached when the distracted lover, led away by the plausible lies he has been told, denounces his bride at the steps of the altar, and her father cries in his agony for her:

"Hath no man here a dagger's point for me?"

The play is noted for its two finished studies of Beatrice and Benedick.

The charm of all the scenes arises from the skill with which their characters are drawn. Benedick, the staunch enemy to marriage, gives very plausible reasons for his theories; but his aversion to matrimony is easily routed by the news that Beatrice loves him dearly. Beatrice, with scorn and disdain "sparkling in her eyes," persecutes Benedick all day long with her jests, and not only turns him, but all other things into ridicule, and is proof against everything serious. She is persuaded to take pity upon Benedick by overhearing her cousin and her maid declare —which they purposely do—that he is dying of love for her. There is a charmingly picturesque touch in the way Beatrice is described as coming to listen to the plot which is contrived against herself:

"And look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference."

Neither Beatrice nor Benedick have a trace of sentimentality; they are wholesome and joyous human creatures, both very much pleased with themselves, and vastly improved by being eventually pleased with one another. Before they come to an understanding each is absorbed in thoughts of the other, but neither will risk the chance of being the one to show the first symptoms of love, so that they remain as apparent enemies for a long time after they had become very good friends. Beatrice is filled with genuine anger against the people who have done great wrong to her cousin—a thing upon which the main plot of the play depends—and persuades Benedick to take up the rôle of champion of her cousin's cause. Benedick fulfils this office so well that he endears himself to Beatrice more and more. The final upsetting of the villain's schemes is accomplished by the low-comedy characters of the play. It is a quaint incongruity that while Benedick is offering his challenge to the wrong-doer, the troubles of the unhappy lovers are put right by Dogberry, the watchman.

The third comedy of the famous four is *As You Like It*, in which we wander through the glades of the Forest of Ardennes, meeting the exiled Duke, who seeks to forget his sorrows there; the melancholy Jacques, who enjoys himself by being miserable; the famous Touchstone; the heroine Rosalind; and the hero Orlando. The play is a pretty dream of pastoral poetry, an exclamation of

relief at the getting away from a noisy and bustling world. The story was not Shakspere's own, but one taken from Thomas Lodge's prose tale *Rosalynde*. Shakspere, however, added several characters, and left out much of the original. Lodge had put together an ordinary rustic story; Shakspere turned it into a graceful idyll that has charmed the world.

"Jacques is the only contemplative person drawn by Shakspere. He thinks, and does nothing." His sole occupation is to amuse his mind; he pays no heed to his body or his fortunes. When his friend the Duke, whom he has accompanied into the forest for a period of retirement, is restored to his sovereignty, and has to go back to the world, Jacques instantly leaves him. His brother, who has turned hermit, will be glad to give him half his all.

Orlando is a man so smitten with love that he cannot recognize his Rosalind when she comes to the forest in a boy's disguise. Nor does he even realize who she is during the long talks that they hold together. The manner in which she plays with her lover in the double character she is supporting is managed with wonderful skill. She probably knows a great deal more of him than he does of her; but there is a deep tenderness in her nature which is very touching, and though her tongue runs fast it is chiefly to conceal the pressure at her heart.

The fourth play, *Twelfth Night*, though a study of the same subject as *As You Like It*, deals with it in a totally different way. It has a full and fresh mirth, quite opposed to the calmer humour of Ardennes, and a keen satire, much more worldly and biting than the mournful remarks of Jacques. A story of robust fun—the trapping of Malvolio, a "sick of self-love" man, by the clamorous Sir Toby Belch—runs side by side with the quieter love affairs of a great noble. This is the Duke of Illyria, who sighs for the Lady Olivia. Viola, another young lady, is madly in love with the Duke, and contrives to be much in his presence, by disguising herself as a lad, and taking the situation of his page. The Duke, when attempting to make love to the Countess Olivia, sends Cesario, this page, to her very frequently; and Olivia, who cannot endure the Duke, is enchanted with the pretty boy. An end is brought about by the return of Viola's brother, who was supposed to have been drowned. He is extraordinarily like his sister, and is immediately accepted by the Countess Olivia; while the Duke, when he hears the story of Viola, finds that she is charming, and makes her happy.

Twelfth Night, the last of Shakspere's joyous comedies, concludes the second period of his writings. In them nearly everything is bright and pleasant, and grave things are treated

lightly. A change, perceptible in the play produced in the next year to *Twelfth Night*, continued in all the dramas that he wrote from that time until 1607.

The subject of Shakspere's *Sonnets* has probably led to more dispute than any other connected with him. It seems impossible to finally decide whether they can be regarded as definite evidence concerning his most personal affairs, or whether they were simply "sugred sonnets among his private friends." One or two can perhaps be judged by their style. A few seem to belong to the time of *Romeo and Juliet*. Others have the more melancholy tone of *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*. They certainly took more than three years to write, but were all included in the period between 1595 and 1605.

They fall into two series—the first of 126 sonnets addressed to a man; the other of twenty-seven, addressing or referring to a woman. The man, whom Shakspere devotedly loved, was handsome, clever, and of high rank. The woman was dark-eyed, pale, and musical, possessed of wonderful attraction. Shakspere admired her greatly, but in his absence she attracted and ensnared Shakspere's friend. From this arose an enmity between the two men, which yielded after a time, and a reconciliation followed.

Shakspere's *Sonnets* are wonderful in execution, with perfection of form, choice of expression, and harmony of words. Each is a little poem of three four-lined stanzas, with a couplet as a finish. There are, consequently, seven rhymes. The true Italian sonnet has two four-lined stanzas, and two three-lined. The first, with eight lines between them, may only have two rhymes. The second, in their six lines, may have three. Here is one of Shakspere's, with its accustomed seven:

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.

"O no! it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star of every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

"Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

"If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved."

40. Shakspere's Third Period.

The third, and perhaps the most important division of Shakspere's work, is that of the plays produced between the years 1601 and 1607. This short space of time is marked by nine dramas, six of which are tragedies of world-wide fame, and three are strange comedies which Shakspere seems to have written as an outlet for the pain of an angered and excited mind. The first of these is a weird play, formerly known as *Love's Labour's Won*, and now called *All's Well that Ends Well*, in which Shakspere left his lighter and brighter comedy to treat of problems different from any that he had attempted before.

The basis of the story came from Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, and Shakspere added several characters to those in the original. Helena, his heroine, poor and low-born, falls in love with Bertram, a wealthy young nobleman, and following him to Paris, wins him against his will. To render this solecism probable is Shakspere's task. He achieves it by giving a curiously minute picture of Helena, drawn as a remarkable contrast to Bertram.

Bertram is young and handsome, with all the faults and follies of youth. His is essentially a nature which requires a brave, bold, and generous disposition to stand beside his own. Helena is faithful to him rather than to herself; she realises the absolute need of her entire service being given to the man whom she adores.

Bertram cannot understand that any woman would be ready to make such a sacrifice. He leaves her, and proceeds upon a course that involves him in shame and falsehood. In the last act Helena returns to save him from himself, and Bertram, having learnt more from his experience than he had ever thought possible, realises at last what Helena means to him, and all ends well.

The next play, *Measure for Measure*, is of a similar and even more unpleasant plot. The third of these comedies is *Troilus and Cressida*, possessing many fine passages, yet not an agreeable play to read. It is a curious feature of the three comedies that each of them contains a certain character skilfully drawn, of the basest and most detestable kind. In *All's Well*, Parolles occupies this position; a mean braggart, too cowardly to be a man, who is finally exposed, and sinks into the utmost degradation. In *Measure for Measure*, Barnardine, a gaol-bird, is a brutal if a powerful creation. Finally, in *Troilus*, is Pandarus, the lying go-between, the agent for other people's evil, a creature hardly fit to be regarded as human.

It is a relief to turn away from these grave comedies to the

dramas, which are the flower of Shakspere's fame. So far Shakspere had not done much in tragedy pure and simple. The love-story of Romeo had been the only one that was properly his own; for the tragical element of *Titus Andronicus* belonged to the original play; and the tragical incidents of the histories were brought about by the course of history itself. To a certain extent historical traditions were repeated in *Julius Cæsar* (1601); but in *Hamlet*, the great work of 1602 and 1603, the tragedy was evolved by Shakspere himself.

He was writing then as a mature man who had actual experience of the world. He had seen, to his grief and sorrow, how personal friends had wrecked their lives, when all had seemed with them to be prosperous and safe. He came to realise how easy it was for the weakness of human nature to undermine its apparent strength. He had watched men whose duties had been too heavy for them to bear, and who were crushed by the weight of their responsibilities. Brutus and Hamlet, in his plays, are both called to the performance of great deeds. Hamlet shows a wild energy, Brutus a considerable amount of wisdom which is misapplied. They fail from lack of strength to cope with so great a strain as is put on them. Hamlet's energy is exhausted, because he can only believe in the failure of life, and because he pays more attention to his own thoughts and ideas than to the actual carrying on of affairs. When he does act, it is in an excited and impulsive manner, which helps to destroy the confidence that others would have felt in him had he been different. Brutus is unpractical in another direction. His public aims are lofty to the highest degree; his public acts never harmonise with the actual condition of things. He is easily surpassed by men like Cassius, of a stamp far lower than himself. He can never understand that the power exercised by Antony is due to Antony's careful watching of other people's natures.

The six tragedies which then followed dealt with a higher theme—the terrible result of giving way to the more wicked passions, the Nemesis that follows after crime.

Jealousy, in the *Merry Wives*, had been treated by Shakspere from the humorous point of view; and in *Troïlus*, from the contemptuous. But in *Othello*, jealousy is used as the instrument by which Iago works upon the Moor, until Othello kills "the sweetest innocent that e'er did lift up eye." In *Macbeth* a woman urges on her husband to murder, merely for the acquisition of power. In *Lear* the king is abased by the violence of his own conceit.

The variety of character in the tragedy of *Othello* is one of its most remarkable features. Othello himself is a mere child of

nature, not losing his simplicity even among the sharper intellects of Venice. He is quick and bold in action and in heroic feats; yet he knows nothing of the complex web of life, and is entirely out of accord with the subtleties of the Italian mind. Desdemona is presented as a singularly favourable type of her sex. She has all the sympathy and sweetness and charming power of companionship that so become women. To such a one, Othello bends with the profoundest reverence; and she takes a genuine pride in his strength and dignity, and in his mighty power of guardianship and help. Neither of them know very much about the other. Their intuition is correct as far as it goes; while in each lie great depths of feeling of whose existence the other is unaware.

It was easy for such a man as Othello to be ensnared by one like Iago. No sign of stealth or hidden villany was visible at all in "honest Iago," as Othello unfortunately termed him. The honest man seemed open and frank enough, but the eyes which watched his fellows were singularly keen. That any human being should be possessed of so double a set of virtues, was a thing that Othello would have found hard to comprehend. Into the trap that Iago laid for him, Othello therefore fell speedily. The mad passion of jealous rage dominated him entirely in the course of a few seconds. He was no longer a living man, but a raving maniac; and not even the pitiful terror of Desdemona, when she heard her doom, was able to make the least impression upon him. The entire derangement of his mind is shown by the equally rapid manner in which he recovers on realising Desdemona's innocence. His resolve to make the only possible atonement is as immediate as his insanity.

> "I kiss'd thee, ere I killed thee—no way but this,
> Killing myself to die upon a kiss."

King Lear is a study of the passions at their greatest tension. The story is taken partly from Holinshed's *Chronicle*, and partly from an old play. The name of Cordelia is adopted from the *Faerie Quene*, and an episode in Sidney's *Arcadia* supplied the idea of incorporating the story of Gloucester with that of Lear. The king, who is in his dotage, intends to divide his kingdom of Britain between his three daughters. This proposal appears to be founded on the strictest justice, but Lear alters it by an exercise of his own feelings. Goneril and Regan, the two elder daughters, protest an affection for their father which knows no bounds. Cordelia, the youngest daughter, the only one, as her name implies, who has any heart, is ashamed of their effusiveness, and finds nothing to say. This arouses the ill-balanced temper of the king, who angrily declares that she shall be

portionless; and the Duke of Burgundy, who has come to England to ask for her as a bride, refuses to marry her when he finds her to be without dower. The King of France, who also has come to woo Cordelia, is the only one who behaves in any reasonable way. He is furious at Lear's insane decision, and takes

> "Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor,
> Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd,"

with him to France to make her his own queen. Shakspere from the first depicts the character of Lear as one that is injured by its own conceit. From the opening scene of the tragedy nothing can redeem him from the wrong he perpetrates.

As soon as Cordelia and her husband have gone, the real nature of the two sisters discloses itself. Their father has rendered himself penniless for their sakes. They treat him with scorn, and even refuse to keep his retinue. He is so wroth at their cold brutality, that, rushing out into the stormy night, accompanied only by his faithful fool, he calls down the curses of the elements upon him because he thinks they have joined with his two daughters to battle against his old white head. The good genius of the play is Edgar, son of the Duke of Gloucester; who, in the guise of the King's Fool, takes care of Lear through all his wanderings. Edmund, an illegitimate son of Gloucester, is the maker of mischief. He does all he can to prejudice his father against Edgar; and finally, when the King of France sends over troops to help Lear, and Cordelia returns with them, it is Edmund who defeats them, and casts Lear and Cordelia in prison. Both of the cruel sisters, by this time, had allowed themselves to fall in love with Edmund, and the quarrel between them becomes in consequence so strong, that Regan is poisoned by Goneril, and Goneril afterwards dies by her own hand.

Edgar then meets Edmund in mortal combat, and is fortunate enough to slay him; but Edmund just before the fight has sent orders to the prison that Cordelia is to be strangled, and she is put to death before Edgar can bring her help. The shock of her murder kills the king, who dies with a full consciousness dawning upon him of all the misery his folly had brought about.

The only gleam of relief is the devotion of Cordelia; and she is slain in her captivity, without even knowing what we know, that her devotion was not thrown away. Lear dies in a paroxysm of grief; his self-conceit and wilfulness shattered for ever. Shakspere gives us a sombre picture of the gods making a sport of men, and leaves us without any key to the problems he propounds.

Three plays more seem to belong to this time. The earliest

of them is probably *Timon of Athens* (1607), of which it is believed that only a small part is to be attributed to Shakspere, and that is written with such dramatic power as to stand very high among the best of Shakspere's work. *Timon of Athens* is the story of a rich profligate man, who wastes all his fortune among his friends; he gratifies his vanity by constantly conferring favours, and comes to think that every one will be as generous as himself. It is only when, by his foolish generosity, his fortune is wasted, and he seeks for help from those who were formerly his friends, that he realises the selfishness and ingratitude of the world. He passes rapidly from his moods of careless kindness to fierce hatred of all his fellows. He tests the depth of baseness while humiliating them, and then departs to live in the woods,

"Where he shall find
The unkindest beast more kinder than mankind,"

breathing deep curses on Athens and his recent associates as he goes.

He lives in the woods by digging up roots, and in the course of his excavations, comes across a great quantity of hidden treasure. He disdains to use it for himself; his contempt for human beings has become so great that to live with them again would be an impossibility. He therefore hands over part of it to the famous Athenian general, Alcibiades, then in exile, and on the verge of attacking Athens. The news of Timon having found a treasure being spread in Athens, a horde of parasites gathers round him at once, but Timon drives them away with blows. Alcibiades' attempt, attended with some success, brings out the Athenian senators to Timon's den. They implore him, for the sake of his connection with Athens, and in honour of the military fame which he has gained, to come and help the city in her need. Timon sends them derisively away, and dies alone, cursing the world.

The play is a study of different temperaments. Alcibiades, a thoroughly practical man, has suffered at the hands of the Athenians certain definite wrongs. He sets about the righting of these wrongs in a calm and sensible manner. Apemantus, a philosopher with a very bitter tongue, and a cowardly heart, professes to agree with Timon in many of his complaints, at the same time that he makes no effort to overcome or to avoid them. Timon cannot accommodate himself, like Alcibiades and Apemantus, to any change in the condition of affairs. He is so wroth at his sufferings, that he can only die.

Antony and Cleopatra is a wonderful study of a great soldier's passion, and of the fascination of the Egyptian queen. Shakspere brings out from the first, in the most subtle way, how no true

love ever exists between them. Each is filled with a marvellous attraction for the other, but Antony never knows when Cleopatra may not be betraying him, and Cleopatra has to take infinite pains to retain her hold upon Antony. The first lines that they speak in the play bear witness to the nature of their attachment:

Cleopatra. "If it be love indeed, tell me how much?
Antony. There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.
Cleopatra. I'll set a bourn how far to be belov'd.
Antony. Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth."

When Antony has to leave her she mourns his absence; to her maid she cries:

"O Charmian,
Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he, or sits he?
Or does he walk? or is he on his horse?
O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!
Do bravely, horse! for wot'st thou whom thou mov'st?
The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm
And burgonet of men. He's speaking now,
Or murmuring, 'Where's my serpent of old Nile?'
For so he calls me. Now I feed myself
With most delicious poison. Think on me,
That am with Phœbus' amorous pinches black
And wrinkled deep in time."

Burgonet, helmet.

The play is always full of that remarkable power by which Shakspere could make himself a master of time and circumstances. His characters move, live, and breathe. Shakspere does not stand reasoning on what they would do or say; he at once *becomes* them, and speaks out and acts for them. He does not present us with groups of stage puppets, but brings living men and women upon the scene. The study of Cleopatra's nature is the work of a master. When it is held in contrast with the picture of Imogen, it would seem almost impossible that the same hand could have drawn both. Cleopatra's passion is the love of pleasure over every other consideration. She has great and unpardonable faults, but the grandeur of her death almost redeems them. From the depth of her despair she learns the strength of her affections; but she keeps her queen-like state in her last disgrace, and her sense of the pleasurable makes her taste a luxury even in her death.

"Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have
Immortal longings in me. Now no more
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip. . . .
I am fire and air—my other elements
I give to baser life—so; have you done?
Come then, and take the last warmth of my lips.
Farewell, kind Charmian; Iras, long farewell."

The next play after *Antony and Cleopatra* seems to be

Coriolanus, in which Shakspere, having depicted the shattering of a fine nature by self-indulgence, now drew the ruin of a similar nature from an extreme of haughtiness and pride. The change is great from the gorgeous splendours of Egypt to the realities of Rome. Yet the republic is no purer than the empire. Rome, at the core, is as unsound as Alexandria. Coriolanus, a patrician by birth, cannot endure the democratic developments which are bringing Rome to ruin. For the popular leaders, the tribunes, he has the greatest contempt; and he makes himself so strong as a political enemy that a sentence of banishment is passed upon him—an insult which cuts him to the quick. He is wroth at the type of adversary to whom he has to yield, because he feels himself deserted by men of his own class, who have pandered to the influences he detests. These injuries so work upon him, that he marches against Rome.

His approach causes great terror throughout the city; and his expedition would have proved fatal, if the Roman matrons had not prevailed upon his wife, Virgilia, and his mother, Volumnia, to go out to his camp, and seek to appease his resentment. For a long time Coriolanus remains inexorable. At last the authority of a Roman mother takes effect, and Coriolanus withdraws his forces. He is called upon to answer for his conduct, but is murdered before his trial.

The character of Coriolanus is wonderfully complete. He loved reputation, and despised public opinion. He was, at the same time, proud and modest. His pride lay in the sternness of his will; his love of glory bade him bear down opposition and win the admiration of both friends and enemies. His contempt for popular favour rose from the fact that he could not contradict the praises bestowed upon him, and was therefore impatient of hearing them. He disliked the expression of his mother's admiration:

> "My mother,
> Who has a charter to extol her blood,
> When she does praise me, grieves me."

The women of the play are interesting; Volumnia is Shakspere's idea of a majestic Roman matron; Virgilia the most dutiful and loyal of wives. Shakspere brings out a purely human touch when he makes Volumnia anxious over Coriolanus' honour, while Virgilia is thinking of his life. Volumnia, imagining she can see her son marching at the head of his troops, speaks of his "bloody brow." Virgilia instantly cries:

> "His bloody brow! O Jupiter, no blood!"

Volumnia answers sternly,

> "Away, you fool! It more becomes a man
> Than gilt his trophy."

Valeria, the friend of Virgilia, is a sweet and honourable woman, far removed from the maidens of Cleopatra. She is described as

> "The moon of Rome, chaste as the icicle
> That's curdied from the frost by purest snow,
> And hangs on Dian's temple."
>
> **Curdled, thickened, congealed.**

41. Shakspere's Fourth Period.

We pass away now from gloomy scenes and studies of crime. Shakspere came, before his death, to look upon human nature with kindlier and more penetrating eyes. The name of *Romances* has been suggested for the dramas of this period. Comedies they are not, for their tone is always grave. Tragedies they are not, for they deal with no great sins, and always end in happiness and peace. "They are concerned with the knitting together of human bonds, the reunion of those who have long been parted, the forgiveness of enemies, the atonement for wrong—not by death, but by repentance—the reconciliation of husband with wife, of parent with child, of friend with friend."

Pericles, the first of these plays, is partly Shakspere's work, though it is not definitely known whether he added to an earlier play, or whether additions have been made to scenes he left unfinished. The portions that may be read are Acts III., IV. (omitting Scenes 3, 5, and 6), and V. The romance, as told in these, is innocent and pretty.

A ship is sailing for Tyre, and is caught in a great storm. Pericles and his wife Thaisa are on board, Thaisa being just about to give birth to a child. The nurse comes to Pericles, and places an infant in his arms, telling him at the same time that his wife has died. The sailors, declaring that they will have no safety while a corpse is in the ship, clamour for Thaisa's body to be cast overboard. It is accordingly placed in a chest with a scroll which requests the finder to give it decent burial. The sea bears this chest in the direction of Ephesus, where it is opened, and Cerimon, a learned nobleman of the city, discovers that Thaisa is not dead, but is in a trance. By skilful treatment he revives her, and she lives. Thaisa cannot, however, remember anything that happened since she went on board the ship, so she enters the Temple of Ephesus as a votaress of Diana.

Pericles meanwhile, when the storm abates, leaves the vessel at Tarsus, the nearest port, not expecting the new-born child to survive the voyage to Tyre. At Tyre he gives Marina—"whom, for she was born at sea, I have named so"—to Cleon, the governor, a man by great obligations indebted to Pericles.

These people keep Marina for some years, until, at last, when she has grown up, Cleon's wife, for the sake of her own daughter, becomes very jealous. She then determines to destroy Marina, and arranges with a hired assassin that the girl should be murdered on the sea-shore. Marina is cunningly enticed there, and the murder is just about to be committed when pirates, suddenly dashing upon the beach, carry Marina off, and sell her to a woman in Mytilene. The man who was paid to kill her ran off at the first approach of the pirates, and got his reward by telling Cleon's wife that he had thrown Marina into the sea.

Marina then passes through many strange and dreadful experiences, luckily without harm. Some years afterwards, by strange chance, while travelling on board a ship, she meets her father, and attends him in illness. They have long talks together, and, to the joy of both, discover their relationship. Diana then appears to Pericles in a vision, and commands him to offer sacrifice at her temple in Ephesus, where he must tell publicly his tale. Pericles obeys, and to the worshippers in the temple relates the story of his great misfortune. Thaisa, his wife, who for years had been a devotee of the temple, has her memory restored by hearing the story. She makes herself known to Pericles, and husband and daughter are both restored.

An interesting point in connection with *Pericles* is that many passages in it seem to have been developed by Shakspere in greater detail, and put into the later dramas of this fourth period. The learned and kind-hearted nobleman of Ephesus, who so fortunately revived the shipwrecked wife of Pericles, is the forerunner of Prospero. In the fifth act, when Marina, as we gather from the play, was in her fifteenth year, she seems like a younger sister of both Miranda and Perdita; and, like Perdita, she has been long separated from her parents. Each name, it will be noticed, conveys a special meaning.

Pericles and Leontes are both plunged into grief by the loss of their wives, but Pericles is melancholy with the depth of his misfortune, while Leontes is gloomy with remorse for his cruelty. The meeting of Pericles with Marina is almost an anticipation of Cymbeline recovering his children, and the re-union of Leontes and Hermione is developed from Pericles' discovery of Thaisa. *Pericles*, therefore, may be looked upon as standing in much the same relation to the three great romances, as the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* did to the finished comedies of the second period.

Cymbeline, the strongest of the romances, is famous for the picture of its heroine, the Princess Imogen. She is daughter of

Cymbeline, King of Britain, whose name is given to the play. On the death of his first wife, the mother of Imogen, Cymbeline married a widowed queen, who, by her former marriage, had a son, Prince Cloten. The queen became very jealous of Imogen, and hated her extremely. Nevertheless, she did all in her power to get Imogen as a wife for Cloten; thinking that by such means his succession to the throne would be secured.

Cloten, however, was so disagreeable a youth, that Imogen shrank from him, and secretly married a young nobleman at the Court, Posthumus Leonatus, a distinguished youth, the son of a more distinguished father. Cymbeline, urged on by his wife, banished Posthumus, and put his daughter into prison. Imogen and her husband, at an affecting parting, exchanged pledges of their affection; and Posthumus started for Rome, while Imogen remained in Britain miserable in her captivity.

At Rome, some time afterwards, Posthumus unfortunately hears some perfectly untrue tales concerning the Princess Imogen; and the story of the play develops into one of the jealousy of the husband and the sufferings of the innocent wife. Posthumus shortly after sends letters to Imogen, requesting her to meet him at Milford Haven, whither Imogen, escaping from prison, hastily travels, accompanied only by one faithful servant, Pisanio. On arrival at Milford, he tells her the awful news that Posthumus does not intend to come, but has ordered Pisanio to murder her at once. Pisanio, however, proves a friend in disguise; and advises Imogen to take steps for her own safety, as he has not the least intention of carrying out his master's orders. He recommends the princess to disguise herself as a boy, and to apply to the Roman ambassador, Lucius, who will directly be passing through Milford on his way to Rome. He will be sure to let Imogen travel in his suite, and she will soon be able to reach her husband. Imogen is so brave that she willingly accepts this suggestion; and the remainder of the play is taken up with showing how she and Posthumus come together again, and the unhappy misunderstanding is explained and forgiven.

Of all Shakspere's heroines, Imogen is the most artless and tender. Her incredulity as to her husband having turned against her, is as touching as Desdemona's unwillingness to believe that Othello was jealous. In the affecting scene when Pisanio gives her Posthumus' letter, and tells her that he has no intention of taking her life, she exclaims:

> "Why, good fellow,
> How shall I do the while? where bide? how live?
> Or in my life what comfort, when I am
> Dead to my husband?"

When he advises her to disguise herself in boy's clothes, and suggests a course by which she may

> "Haply be near the residence of Posthumus,"

she cries,

> "Oh, for such means,
> Though peril to my modesty, not death on't,
> I would adventure!"

Pisanio, enlarging on the consequences, tells her she must change

> "Fear and niceness—
> The handmaids of all women, or more truly,
> Woman its pretty self—into a waggish courage,
> Ready in gibes, quick answer'd, saucy, and
> As quarrelous as the weasel";

and she interrupts him eagerly,

> "Nay, be brief:
> I see into thy end, and am almost
> A man already."

The other great charm of Imogen lies in her lack of self-consciousness. All along, she relies little upon her personal charms. She depends solely upon the strength of her love, truth, and constancy. She develops in the readers of the play as great an affection as she had for Posthumus; and she deserves it better.

The Tempest, written apparently late in 1610, opened, like Shakspere's part of *Pericles*, with a storm at sea, and ended, as did all the romances, with peace and happiness upon earth.

Antonio, the usurping Duke of Milan, and some of his friends, travellers on board a ship which is caught in the storm, were wrecked upon the shores of a mysterious island, where Prospero, the lawful Duke of Milan, dwelt with his daughter, Miranda.

Prospero was skilled in many strange arts, one of them being the control of the spirits of the air. The Tempest had been specially arranged by him, and its management entrusted to the dainty Ariel, a creature of the air, who was in Prospero's power. As a result, no one on board the ship was drowned; all got safe to shore, but they were separated, in order to give Prospero an opportunity of carrying out his plans. Prospero intended to reproach his wicked brother for the baseness of his conduct, and to grant pardon, and close the long quarrel with reconciliation, by marrying Miranda to Prince Ferdinand, the King of Naples' son.

Ferdinand had scrambled to land from the wreck, and sat on a bank lamenting his father's misfortune, when he was attracted by charming music floating towards him over the water, and then moving away towards the centre of the island. This

music was played by Ariel, invisible by Prospero's orders, and Ferdinand, following it, found himself in the presence of Prospero and Miranda. Ferdinand was immediately attracted by Miranda's beauty. Miranda was absorbed at the sight of a young gentleman, a creature she had never seen before. Prospero, with a grim humour, watched his plans working themselves out successfully; and took care, by exercise of his magic power, to prevent them from developing too soon.

Prospero, by his charms, then brought into a magic circle the King of Naples and Antonio, the usurping Duke of Milan, with others who travelled in the ship. He explained who he was, and what power he had over them, and showed them the happiness of Miranda and Ferdinand. Ferdinand received his father's blessing, and Miranda was accepted as the prince's bride. Prospero then freed his faithful servant Ariel, and loosing the bond from Caliban, his monster servant, prepared to leave the island. To the King of Naples he promised:

> "In the morn
> I'll bring you to your ship and so to Naples,
> Where I have hope to see the nuptial
> Of these our dear-beloved solemnized;
> And thence retire me to my Milan, where
> Every third thought shall be my grave."

The Tempest is not a play that can be presented on the stage; it is rather a poem, cast into a dramatic form, to be regarded as a vision of human life. In Shakspere's earlier play of fairydom, elves had mastery over human beings; they could tease and perplex them, and no effort of the mortals could keep them in order. In *The Tempest*, supernatural powers were controlled by a man.

Caliban represents the rough, material portion of the universe, as Ariel represents the elements that are ethereal and refined. Caliban is not vulgar, for he never pretends to be what he is not. He is coarse because he is of the earth, earthy. "Shakspere painted the human animal rude and without choice in its pleasures, but not without the sense of pleasure or some germ of affection."

The Winter's Tale tells also of shipwreck, separation, and a coming together. The sufferings of Queen Hermione are brought about not by mere misfortune, as in *Pericles*, or by a supernatural interference with ordinary events, as in *The Tempest*; they result entirely from the foolish jealousy of the queen's husband, Leontes.

Leontes plots against the life of his friend Polixenes, King of Bohemia, who luckily escapes from his clutches. Hermione is cast into prison by her infuriated husband, and there her little daughter is born. By the king's orders the child is

taken out to sea, and left on the coast of Bohemia. The man who undertakes this work is attacked and killed by a bear immediately after he has deserted the child. A good-hearted shepherd, finding the infant on the beach, and, taking it to his cottage, brings it up as his own child, giving to it the name of Perdita. Queen Hermione, overwhelmed by her husband's brutality, is declared to be dead. The years pass by, and Perdita has grown into a young woman, when she is seen by Florizel, the son of King Polixenes. He falls deeply in love with her, and, to escape the wrath of his father for making so low-born a match, he flies with her to the court of Leontes, where finally all the secrets are revealed. Not only is Perdita shown to be a king's daughter, but Queen Hermione is brought from the retirement where, for so many years, she has been living. To Leontes, undeserving as he is, a wife and a daughter, in one moment, are restored.

The character of Hermione is drawn with wonderful skill. The queen is distinguished by her saint-like resignation ; and even with her deep feelings she is never unjust to her husband. The scene of her return to life is beautifully and effectively pictured ; and when her forgiveness is silently granted, the highest point of pathos is attained. The courtship of Perdita and Florizel is that of a sweet and innocent romance ; and the charm of the country scenes surpasses all Shakspere's other representations of rural life. Autolycus, a marvellous study, is second only to Falstaff, a scoundrel for whom we are bound to have a liking.

XI. BEN JONSON.

42. The Career of Ben Jonson.

Ben Jonson was born in Westminster in the early part of the year 1574. His grandfather belonged to Annandale, in Scotland, and his father was a clergyman, who died shortly before Ben was born. His mother, very soon after his birth, married a man who followed the trade of a bricklayer, or builder ; and Ben's childhood was passed in Hartshorn Lane, near Charing Cross. He was sent at first to the Parish School of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, but afterwards obtained admission to Westminster. This he owed to the second master, William Camden, who subsequently became the head-master, a man famed for his learning and kindly nature. Ben Jonson had always for Camden the greatest affection and respect, and addressed him in one of his epigrams in the following words:

> "Camden, most reverent head, to whom I owe
> All that I am in arts, and all I know."

Camden gave him an excellent classical training, and some biographers have stated that Jonson went from school to Cambridge. Even if the statement were correct, it would only seem possible that he could stay for a very short time, on account of the poor circumstances of his parents. The fact that he was forced to enter his stepfather's business sufficiently proves that he had no university career. For the making of bricks, however, he developed so great an antipathy that he ran away from the kilns and enlisted as a volunteer to fight against Spain in the Low Countries. He behaved with great bravery, though remaining for only one campaign. Then making his way back to England, about 1596 he married, and began to write for the stage. He worked for Henslowe, a well-known player and manager, and possibly sometimes acted. He was not, however, a success in the profession. Very soon after his return, he killed another actor in a duel. He himself received a severe wound, and being committed to prison on a charge of murder, was released without trial. During his short confinement in jail a Catholic priest visited him and converted him to the Roman faith, in which he remained for about twelve years.

His comedy of *Every Man in his Humour* was produced at the Globe Theatre in 1598. In this theatre Shakspere had a share, and a tradition was long extant that Jonson's work was helped on by Shakspere's influence. The play had been written two years before, the scene being laid in Florence and the characters all being Italian. Before its production at the Globe it was made English, and the scene was laid in London, between Coleman Street and Hoxton. The play was a real comedy and well constructed. The action is contained in a single day, and the course of time is exactly, though unobtrusively, marked as the play proceeds. Each character is distinguished by a peculiar humour or quality, and they are all made to carry the incidents into an ingenious difficulty which only the fifth act is able to unravel. This first play of Jonson's was sufficient to show the change that had come into play-writing. By Shakspere human nature had been dealt with as it is; by Jonson men and women were only shown when under the influence of some particular humour. "The manners, now called humours, feed the stage," were the words that Jonson himself used.

The next three plays were of a different nature—sharp dramatic satires, in which Jonson strongly expressed his opinions. The citizens were criticised in *Every Man out of his Humour*, and the courtiers in *Cynthia's Revels*. The first play was honoured by the presence of the Queen, who became a patroness of Jonson, and ever afterwards he was a "man of mark and likelihood." In *Cynthia's Revels* he had drawn the

character of the true poet as contrasted with him who pandered to the popular favour. Jonson's own honesty was true and perfectly obvious in his work, yet he expressed himself with overwhelming pride, and could not refrain from avowing his scorn for others. It was not only his attacks upon them that so galled his friends. His self-complacency seemed to them unbearable. Nor were matters much smoothed down by the *Poetaster*. The scene of that play is laid in Rome at the height of the great Augustan age, when we meet with Cæsar, Ovid, Tibullus, Virgil, and Horace, who is Jonson himself. The Poetaster, a word which, by Jonson's use of it, has been made part of the English language, is a certain Crispinus representing Marston, and Demetrius representing Dekker, both of them dramatists. They are solemnly arraigned in the fifth act on the charge of "calumniating Quintus Horatius Flaccus (which signified Jonson), taxing him falsely of arrogancy, self-love, railing, impudence, filching by translation, etc." This play was the cause of immediate commotion. Marston and Dekker answered with *The Satiromastix* (the whip for the satirist), a play which was a spiteful parody of Jonson's, and in which cruel reference was made to Jonson's personal failings. Jonson, however, feeling that he had perhaps gone too far, answered with a clever Epilogue to show that the dispute was only an amicable one among friends. At the same time he declared that he would give up comedy,

> "Since the comic Muse
> Hath proved so ominous to me, I will try
> If tragedy have a more kind aspect.
> Her favours in my next I will pursue,
> When, if I prove the pleasure of but one,
> So he judicious be, he shall be alone
> A theatre unto me."

For the next two years he worked steadily, produced his Roman play, and, in 1603, the year of Elizabeth's death, *Sejanus*. He had received some assistance from another writer, and the combination of efforts was not very successful. *Sejanus* was put into much better shape two years later, by which time Jonson had it recast and printed. It was a tragedy clear in its structure, and with a certain dignity in its main thought, but it was wanting in human interest, and did not make much appeal to either audience or reader. Shakspere took part in the performance of this play; and it has been supposed that he might have contributed some of the verse. The tragedy shows Jonson's wide knowledge of the classic drama; and, in this case, does not overwhelm his work with learning. He showed his satiric power best in the character of Sejanus, a man who despised the

gods, but kept in his house an altar to Fortuné. Sejanus paid no heed to spiritual things; and strove only for worldly success. He arrived at a great position, and was shattered by his fall—

> "Let this example move the insolent man
> Not to grow proud and careless of the gods."

By 1603, the anger of the *Satiromastix* controversy had all died away. Dekker worked with Jonson on a masque to celebrate the accession of James the First; Marston dedicated his best play, *The Malcontents*, to Jonson; and when *Sejanus* was printed in 1605, a token of Marston's friendship appeared on the title-page. In that same year Marston, Chapman, and Jonson collaborated over a play called *Eastward Hoe!* in which were some passages reflecting on the Scotch. Marston and Chapman were sent to jail, and Jonson voluntarily accompanied them. They were threatened with having their ears and noses slit; and were eventually released without any punishment.

Jonson's three masterpieces then followed—*Volpone, or the Fox*, was written in about his thirtieth year, a dreadful and almost ferocious study of lust and avarice; *Epicœne, or the Silent Woman*, in 1609, a comedy of pure mirth; and the *Alchemist*, a bitter satire of knaves and fools. A year after this his second tragedy, *Catiline*, appeared; a play full of learning and vigour, though wanting in life and animation.

Of these three plays, *Volpone* is certainly the finest. It has a skilfully handled plot, and displays an extraordinary amount of ability. The subject is disagreeable, and tinged with improbability.

The second play, *Epicœne*, pictures a wealthy and unrefined society. Morose, a crusty old man, hates two things equally; he cannot bear noise; and he loathes his nephew, Dauphine. He very much wishes to marry, in order to spite this nephew, but fears that he may get a wife with a sharp tongue. Dauphine introduces to him a silent girl, named Epicœne, whose unwillingness to speak, and whose sweet voice when she does, so charm the old man, that he weds her forthwith. He has to submit to the torture of the ceremony, and suffers from the noise made by Dauphine and his companions at the wedding feast. When the feast is over, the bride becomes remarkably talkative, and the laughter of Dauphine's friends at his disappointments, reduces Morose almost to madness. His nephew promises to release him on the condition that he is granted a good allowance and is made his uncle's heir. Morose eagerly grasps at the offer. Then Dauphine reveals his plot; Epicœne is a boy in girls' clothes.

The Alchemist is full of the learning which Jonson possessed,

though here he employs it in a wearisome manner. Sir Epicure Mammon, in Jonson's picture, is no longer the embodiment of a humour; he is a study of a human character. His one idea is to acquire the secret of transmuting metals. Then he will revel in luxury and extravagant living:

"I will have all my beds blown up, not stuft:
Down is too hard; and then mine oval room
Fill'd with such pictures as Tiberius took
From Elephantis, and dull Aretine
But coldly imitated. Then my glasses
Cut in most subtle angles to disperse
And multiply the figures as I walk. . . .
My mists
I'll have of perfume, vapour'd 'bout the room,
To lose myself in; and my baths like pits
To fall into; from whence I will come forth
And roll me dry in gossamer and roses. . . .
And my flatterers
Shall be the pure and gravest of divines
That I can get for money. My mere fools
Eloquent burgesses. . . .
My meat shall all come in, in Indian shells
Dishes of agate set in gold, and studded
With emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths and rubies.
The tongues of carps, dormice, and camels' heels
Boil'd in the spirit of sol and dissolv'd pearl,
Apicius' diet against the epilepsy;
And I will eat these broths with spoons of amber,
Headed with diamond and carbuncle.
My footboy shall eat pheasants, calver'd salmons,
Knots, godwits, lampreys; I myself will have
The beards of barbels served instead of sallads—
Oil'd mushrooms:
For which I'll say unto my cook, '*There's gold;*
Go forth, and be a knight.'"

In 1612 Jonson went abroad as tutor and companion to the son of Sir Walter Ralegh, and did not return to England for about two years. Then he brought out his *Bartholomew Fair*, with its famous study of Zeal-in-the-Land Busy; a broad farcical play, in which he pictured the great city's festival, and exposed the folly of the outside show of Puritanism. The comedy of *The Devil is an Ass* tells how Pug, an imp, got a holiday to go on earth, but on returning to Hades quite lost his character, for as Satan said to him,

"Whom hast thou dealt with?
Woman or man this day, but have outgone thee
Some way, and most have proved the better fiends."

The rest of his works bear the marks of increasing age; some are so poor that Dryden speaks of them as "dotages." During the last years of his life his poetical instinct and power revived,

and the *Sad Shepherd* proved the old cunning of his hand had returned, and he was growing kinder and more gentle towards his death. He died in 1637 in the sixty-third year of his age, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. There was some talk of a monument; yet nothing was done, except that one Jack Young gave a mason eighteen pence, to carve, on the slab over the grave, the weighty words,

"O rare Ben Jonson."

XII. SHAKSPERE AND BEN JONSON.

43. A Comparison of their Work as Poets.

One of the most interesting studies in literature is a comparison of the two great dramatists, Shakspere and Ben Jonson. In their own days they were probably regarded as being of the same merit, and Beaumont and Fletcher were looked upon as quite their equals. The canons of criticism have altered greatly since the seventeenth century, and so wide a judgment would not now be accepted. Before attempting any judgment, it is necessary to determine the lines of our enquiry. In the present case, we must first realise what the word drama implies; and then we must form an idea of what a drama demands.

Drama implies, in its etymological meaning, a sense of action. A drama should therefore centre round some incident or series of incidents by the study of which the emotions or passions of the reader may be stirred in sympathy with, or else in opposition to, the emotions and passions of the characters in the play. The incidents, in their nature, should be uncommon, though they ought not to be impossible or even improbable. A drama should attract our attention by depicting the conflict of great spirits with great events.

Hence, in a drama, the weaving together of incident known as *plot* is indispensable, and the plot should take for its motive something which is noble rather than mean or merely ingenious. Of the two chief forms of the drama, tragedy, dealing with passion or emotion, is superior to comedy, dealing with manners.

Next in importance to plot and incident stands the study of character. However elevating or inspiring its motive may be, a drama is of little value unless the persons represented are true to nature. It is necessary that the greatest care should be taken to represent human beings as they are, and not simply as they seem to be. This study requires sympathetic observation and skill in description.

Such description cannot be effected without the use of dialogue; and just as the characters themselves must possess the attributes of men and women, so must the dialogue resemble the speech of

human beings. Yet it should not literally reproduce our ordinary speech, which is often vague and formless. On the other hand, it must not be too formal or pompous, lest it become unnatural.

A dramatic work, therefore, to be of good quality must conform, in the matters of plot, character study, and dialogue, to the requirements of a purely natural treatment. We will now make some comparison of the writings of Shakspere and Ben Jonson, to realise how near they approach to this canon.

Shakspere's work is usually divided into three classes of Tragedy, History, and Comedy. Such a subdivision is impossible for the work of Ben Jonson. Of tragedy proper, he has none. His histories are limited to two Roman plays; the English historical drama, in which Shakspere so excelled, being absent from Jonson's work altogether. The comedies of the two writers, however, lend themselves to minute comparison when they are regarded as not being all of one kind, but as either comedies of manner or comedies of romance. Broadly speaking, Jonson excels in the first; Shakspere in the second. This does not imply that Shakspere is wanting in the comedy of manners; but that while, in his hands the manners are those of mankind, in Jonson's they are only those of a particular age. We turn to Shakspere for studies of human nature; from Jonson we only learn what our forefathers were like at some one particular period.

Another difference between the two poets exists in the fact that Jonson's plays and incidents are almost uniformly disagreeable; Shakspere's almost invariably the reverse. There is villainy in the *Merchant of Venice*, detestable and black as it well can be. Yet the sympathies of the spectators are directed towards a story of devotion, thrown all the more strongly into relief by reason of the darkness of its background. They are asked to contemplate a study of the triumph of goodness over wrong. The villainy of *Volpone*, however, forms the backbone of the whole play. It is not so much that the sympathies of the spectators are touched, as that their curiosity is roused to explore the depths to which cunning and avarice will sink. Background and incident alike are dark. The justice dealt out in the closing scenes of *Volpone* is the impersonal justice of a court. It is justice administered without human interest. The justice of the *Merchant of Venice* is human interest strengthened by the action of the law.

So again, in the comedies of manners, *Love's Labour's Lost*, extravagant and satirical though it be, pleases both by its incidents and story. It contains much that is genuinely poetic, apart altogether from the satire. *Cynthia's Revels* is poetic only

in name; its flagellation of folly is as wearisome as the folly was itself.

The Alchemist, which has been described as essentially a "comedy of character and manners," is, in its nature, intensely disagreeable. It is difficult to find any play by Shakspere with which to compare it; and the same thing has to be noticed with regard to *Bartholomew Fair*. There is, in fact, only one other production of art to which *Bartholomew Fair* is comparable—a series of pictures by Hogarth. Though cast into the form of a farce pure and simple, it is really a grim satire upon the religious cant of Jonson's day, a picture of Jacobean life more vigorous even than the famous Paul's Walk scenes of the Humour comedies.

In the management of plot, Jonson again varies greatly from Shakspere. Passing altogether over the charm which Shakspere has conveyed into his stories, the simplicity of his treatment is directly opposite to the intricacy of Jonson. Jonson worked in two extremes; his plots were either obvious and scanty, or else complicated and confused. *Epicœne*, for example, turns upon a man's detestation of noise, a poor motive for the chief interest of a play. On the other hand, in the humour comedies as well as in *Cynthia's Revels* and *Bartholomew Fair*, the reader is burdened with unnecessary detail. The obscure intrigues of these plays go far to conceal their genuine merit.

Shakspere deals with both points in a far more satisfactory manner. The motive of the *Comedy of Errors* is of little more value than that of *Epicœne*. A series of misunderstandings arising from twin-likenesses cannot claim to be higher art than an *imbroglio* caused by a hatred of noise. The misadventures of the *Comedy*, however, could only come about in consequence of the facts of the play; and the motive may be mean, but the intrigue is dependent upon it. In *Epicœne* too many and too important events are brought about by the most trivial cause.

From the second fault, undue complexity of plot, Shakspere is almost entirely free. It is not necessary to refer to the tragedies, because it is essential that their story should possess a classic simplicity. But even in comedy, where such a rule does not exist, no confusion whatever attaches either to Shakspere's stories, or the manner of their telling.

This is partly due to the romantic nature of the tales upon which Shakspere based his plays; for it is a peculiarity of romance that, though lending itself to elaborate development, in its germ it stands next to the epic for simplicity. In a comedy of manners such plainness of theme is impossible. That species of drama turns not so much upon the circumstances of a story as upon the way in which a certain group of persons

will regard those circumstances. We are interested in the effect which incidents have upon people, rather than in the influence which people may exercise on the incidents.

Much of this peculiar quality of Jonson's work results from a fact in which he took especial pride, namely, that his plots were almost entirely his own. At first sight, this seems purely conscientious workmanship; in reality, it is a clue to many of his characteristics.

The bent of his mind, though saturnine to a degree, was not tragic. He seldom or never touched the sublime, certainly never by one flash or stroke of genius; if at all, laboriously, and by the mere heaping up of matter. His disposition made him an unrivalled observer of manners, and there is little wonder that he preferred to construct his own plots. Given a certain amount of character-study, it was easier to force the tale to fit the persons than to make the persons subservient to the story. He was too much absorbed in the life around him to cultivate the reflective faculty by which alone passions of tragedy can be appreciated and portrayed. The sublimities of wrath and madness, of overmastering jealousy, of profound philosophy did not come under his notice in the midst of the London where he lived. Lear, Hamlet, Othello, and Prospero would have been impossible in an atmosphere of Bobadils and Subtles. The days of James were not great days, as had been those of Elizabeth. Jonson had less opportunity than Shakspere of observing men under the influence of the deeper emotions, and he had no gift of creating such experiences out of his own brain.

As is the case with every other artist, what was Jonson's strength was at the same time his weakness. His work shows almost an entire lack of nature. The remark has been justly made that the scaffolding was never removed from the edifices he built up. The luxuriant fancy that, with Shakspere, grew free, by Jonson was pinned down, and kept within bounds. We pity Jonson for the weight he had to bear, but we are compelled to recognise that the burden was self-inflicted.

Few things are more remarkable than the way in which Shakspere identified himself with his characters. This was not done in the sense that he put a portrait of himself into every one of them, but that he could assimilate to himself the minds and feelings of them all. His power is excellently described by Hazlitt. "Shakspere," he writes, "may be said, for the time, to identify himself with the character he wishes to represent, and to pass from one to the other, like the same soul animating different bodies. . . . His plays alone are properly expressions of the passions, not pictures of them. His characters are real beings of flesh and blood; they speak like men, not like authors."

This result was brought about by Shakspere's method of inductive treatment; which showed, from numerous examples of speech and action, how the whole bent of some character's mind was turned in one particular direction. By such an accumulation of instances, the virtue or vice most attractive to that character was made clear; and the observer was enabled to say, "This was a generous, this a jealous, this a passionate man."

Inductive reasoning, always superior to deductive, tells nowhere more effectively than in poetic work. By it we follow the growth of a mind; in watching that growth we unconsciously study the development of a virtue or a passion. The character represented to us becomes a human being. We recognise that the creation is one of flesh and blood.

Deductive reasoning, on the contrary, would assume the existence of a certain vice, a certain merit, a certain peculiarity. Then, applying this to a certain individual, that is, endowing him with the vice, merit, or characteristic, it would be careful to see that the individual performed no action or uttered no speeches unless they were consistent with the merit or defect that he was supposed to possess.

Deductive work, therefore, is of little interest so far as the characters are concerned. It is more important as a test of the skill of the dramatist. When the author starts his play by saying that such a one shall be brave and such another cowardly, that this man shall be profligate and that man generous and true, we are not so much absorbed in the characters themselves, as in watching whether the author forgets or oversteps the limits which he himself has laid down.

Shakspere and Jonson display these two qualities of poetic workmanship in the highest degree. The deductive method assists greatly in preserving the consistency of character, for it is only carelessness on the part of the dramatist if the boundaries be overstepped. Still, the consistencies of character in a deductive study interest us in a minor degree. The individuals are then in a manner labelled; we know all along what they are expected to do. The only question is, whether the dramatist makes them do it. With inductive work the consistency of character is human and absorbing; its variations add to the delicacy of the study. If they occur in the deductive method, they are signs of a decline of skill.

For the sake of illustration we must now examine the way in which two or three characters can be treated by an inductive method. In *Othello* we are presented from the first with the picture of a man whose mental power has always been subordinate to his physical. These words he says concerning himself:

"Little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats and broils of battle;
And therefore little shall I grace my cause
In speaking for myself."

He is more accustomed to camps than to courts:

"Since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have us'd
Their dearest action in the tented field."

By nature he is quick and passionate:

"Now, by Heaven,
My blood begins my safer guides to rule;
And passion, having my best judgment collied,
Assays to lead the way: If I once stir
Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
Shall sink in my rebuke."

Collied, blacked, discoloured.

At the same time he is generous and ready to forgive. When Othello is furious with Iago, and Desdemona intercedes on the man's behalf, he immediately changes. Having previously declared that he did not care that Cassio should come to dine, on Desdemona's appeal he gives way at once, and says to her:

"Prithee, no more; let him come when he will;
I will deny thee nothing."

Upon such a temperament, the skill of Iago finds good opportunity to play. Othello has his mind worked up by Iago into a condition favourable for receiving the seeds of jealousy, though, as at first presented, he is not a jealous man. This fact cannot be too strongly insisted upon, if we wish to understand the methods which Shakspere followed. There is in him a capacity for being jealous; and this, which is an attribute quite different from jealousy itself, is clearly shown and carefully expanded.

Othello's temperament then, being what it is, Iago prepares the soil as cunningly as may be, and when the suggestion of jealousy is at last hinted, Othello accepts it greedily, being all the while almost unconscious of it. He accepts it with a rapidity of belief entirely in keeping with his foreign blood, his actions, and his temper. The result is the growth of a jealousy which becomes not so much a passion as an overmastering fiend.

Here, then, we have a complete example of Shakspere's workmanship, which gives us a true study in the growth and development of character. In Ben Jonson's method we are confronted with studies of a totally different nature. We are shown a character who is ticketed at the outset as being avaricious, cruel, or immoral. We can find an excellent specimen in

the "Character of the Persons," which is prefixed to *Every Man out of his Humour*. Puntarvolo is there described as "A vain-glorious knight, over-englishing his travels, and wholly consecrated to singularity; the very Jacob's staff of compliment; a sir that hath lived to see the revolution of time in most of his apparel, of presence good enough, but so palpably affected to his own praise that (for want of flatterers) he commends himself to the floutage of his own family. He deals upon returns and strange performances, resolving (in despight of public derision) to stick to his own particular fashion, phrase, and gesture."

If we have descriptions like this provided for us, we can only say, "This character is such a one; and he must needs follow such and such a line of action." We find ourselves, therefore, in the position of watching the dramatist rather than the individual. Jonson consequently begins where Shakspere leaves off. He does not delineate the growth of passion, or the fluctuations of character when affected by varying passion. His monsters spring into sight, fully armed and equipped, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. Shakspere takes the raw clay; and makes a human being grow before our eyes.

Another character of Shakspere's affords us a study of a wavering and a variable man. Yet in every one of Macbeth's actions, faltering though they may be, we can see a steady purpose in the background, which impels him to a terrible crime. This result is one which Macbeth himself could not realise. Shakspere knew that consistency lay in this human inconsistency; had Jonson dealt with such a character, he would have labelled him as a murderer to begin with, and would then have given him a victim in every other act.

As a matter quite apart from the question of these two ways of treatment, Jonson's characters may be contrasted with Shakspere's on another ground, that the latter are universally true to nature, while the former only offer pictures of society at some one particular time. We do not go to Shakspere merely to know what people were like, or how they thought, in the days of Elizabeth and James. There is a certain amount of Tudor spirit about Shakspere's creations, because he himself had lived in Tudor times. But he went far beneath the surface, under the trappings of dress and of sixteenth century speech. He looked into the minds and hearts of men, and saw them, not only as they are influenced by the particular age they live in, but in their universal characteristics. We do not go to *Twelfth Night* for a study of the manners of Illyria, or *As You Like It* for a description of a court; though, having read the plays, we can recognise a Malvolio or a Frederick at the present day.

Dialogue for the dramatist has to fulfil the duties of almost every method of writing. A narrative poem can break off the course of its story to explain, by description, the surroundings of any incident; while the dramatic poet is forced to put such words into the mouth of one of his characters, and at the same time to contrive that they shall appear as a natural part of the actor's speech. The moonlight scene in the *Merchant of Venice* (Act v., Sc. i.) is not only perfect as description; its value is increased by the place and by the way in which it is introduced. The idea of a storm, again, is better conveyed by the scenes of *King Lear* than by Falconer's *Shipwreck*.

If, again, we consider dialogue as being a vehicle for reflection, it has always been remarked of Shakspere that there was hardly a branch of human experience on which he has not thrown some light. Ben Jonson was surfeited with knowledge. When compared with Shakspere, he is a scholar beside an uneducated man. Yet there cannot be found in his work one tithe of the wisdom, the philosophy, or the reflection which can be gathered from every page of Shakspere.

In the dialogue of Jonson we can virtually read treatises on alchemy and venery. In *The Alchemist* is a speech on the making of gold, filled with technical terms, and forty lines long. His Roman plays contain literal translations of the speeches of Cicero; yet we have no such picture as Shakspere, in four lines, has put into the mouth of Brutus:

> "Cicero
> Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes,
> As we have seen him in the Capitol,
> Being cross'd in conference with some senators."

Jonson's dialogue is eminently matter-of-fact. The glamour of poetry is altogether wanting. In Shakspere, passages are to be found of an unearthly glow and colour, sensuous as the odes of Keats, yet always throwing light upon the characters or incidents to which they belong. Take, for example, the speech of Oberon:

> "My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememb'rest
> Since once I sat upon a promontory
> And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,
> Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
> That the rude sea grew civil at her song
> And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
> To hear the sea-maid's music."

This passage, for glamour of phrase, is only comparable to the description of the song:

> "That oft-times hath
> Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

If it be contended, and allowed, that the highest function of the dramatist is adherence to measure and proportion, Jonson must bear off the palm. If it be thought that the dramatist's office is to hold a mirror up to nature, the pre-eminence belongs to Shakspere. Jonson promises that he will paint men, not monsters; but he fails in his undertaking. His Macilente, his Corvino, his Puntarvolo, with all their obedience to rule and unity, are nearer to monstrosity than the irregular humanities of Richard the Second, Prospero, or Othello. Jonson took a wrong ideal for both men and monsters. He thought nothing could be like man unless it were formal; he held that everything diverging from set rule must necessarily be monstrous.

Critical opinion as to the nature of Jonson's work is unanimous; with regard to its merits, there is much difference of opinion. He was "a man of letters to the very core"; and his productions appeal chiefly to those of the same kind; but they will ever suffer from the worst blemish of art, in that they seldom please.

An exception has of course to be made in the case of his *Masques*, and his occasional songs and lyrics. Here the most brilliant imagination, absolutely denied to his set dramas, finds full play. The little lyric of *The Noble Nature* and the *Hymn to Diana* are perfect in their form, and charming.

The Noble Nature.

"It is not growing like a Tree
In bulk, doth make man better be
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere:
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May
Although it fall and die that night—
It was the plant and flower of light.
In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures, Life may perfect be."

Hymn to Diana.

"Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair
State in wonted manner keep;
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

"Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear when day did close;
Bless us then with wishéd sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

"Lay thy bow of pearl apart
And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright!"

44. The Moralities of Shakspere and Ben Jonson.

The poet is the great teacher of the world. It is he who stands between nature and mankind and makes plain to his fellows those things which otherwise it would not be given them to see. It may be that the world refuses to hear his message. It may pass him by, it may even thrust him on one side, yet the utterance of the message is his work, and his duty is fulfilled when the utterance is given. Often, too, the world listens more readily to a false note than to a true song; so that he is doubly happy who finds the truth of his message recognised during his own life. To a certain extent, this was the lot of Shakspere. The hard struggles of his early years were rewarded with a great success while he was still young; and though the remainder of his life was not altogether free from troubles and vexations, the sordid worries of existence had been removed by his thirtieth year. He was so great and calm that he seems something more than mortal; but he does not sit, cold and stately, above the world, for he is essentially human—the highest development of humanity, rather than anything that differs from humanity itself.

Hence all his mode of thought is intensely natural, both in his love for nature—for he himself is one with nature—and also in his love and sympathy with men. The world, as he reveals it to us, is not the sublime and awe-inspiring vision of Milton; it is the world that lies round us, which we, too, might have understood, if only we had possessed Shakspere's gift of seeing.

The keynote of his philosophy is love for humanity, not the false liking which is based on self-interest. In Shakspere's sympathy, every one is the same, if only he is human. The king knows pain and grief as well as the peasant, the humblest suffer remorse as well as the highest. The infinite characters of mankind are ranged before Shakspere, and his clear eye reads the secrets of all. He lays his finger upon the touch of nature which unites mankind; he perceives unerringly the various qualities which make the differences between mankind. In his omniscience, Shakspere stands unapproachable and alone.

...rality, as has been well said, makes up three-fourths of ...d unquestionably it is that upon which the existence ...et should depend. For however great may be beauty of

verse, unless morality underlies it, its numbers will be no more than the tinkling of a cymbal. It may be, too, of as many forms as verse. There is a morality running through the *Canterbury Tales*, none the less effective because it differs from the graver morality of *Paradise Lost*. The morality of the *Lyrical Ballads* is the austere expression of *Epipsychidion*, or *Prometheus Unbound*. The thought of such lines as the following, from the former poem:

> "She met me, stranger, upon life's rough way
> And lured me towards sweet death; as Night by Day,
> Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by sweet Hope
> Led into light, life, peace."

is, allowing for the difference of form, almost identical with the more restrained verses of Wordsworth:

> "She lived unknown, and few could know
> When Lucy ceased to be;
> But, she is in her grave, and oh!
> The difference to me!"

Compare, again, the similarity of thought with the difference of expression in the following. Shelley, in the *Prometheus Unbound*, has these beautiful lines:

> "And thou art far,
> Asia, who when my being overflowed,
> Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine,
> Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust."

Wordsworth exercises precisely the same idea in totally different speech:

> "I saw her upon nearer view,
> A spirit, yet a woman too!
> A being breathing thoughtful breath,
> A traveller between life and death;
> A perfect woman, nobly planned,
> To warn, to comfort and command:
> And yet a spirit still, and bright
> With something of an angel light."

The morality of true poetry is always in harmony with the form of the poet's song.

The presence of the graver thought is of the greatest importance; and it is in respect of this that Shakspere is unrivalled. Jonson possesses the gift to a certain extent; though his study of the minds of men caused him to neglect the more important study of their hearts. Real elevation of thought is wanting in his plays; and with all the merit they possess, they are deficient in true feeling. His characters, too, are never

lovable; and a bond of sympathy between author and reader is impossible. They are, moreover, such persons as we would not willingly be ourselves; and he does not put before us any whom we can emulate. The defect is not one of oversight, or artistic error. It is rather a defect of mental constitution. It shows what a chasm exists between Jonson and Shakspere; and how different was their conception of a poet's functions.

XIII. THE DRAMA AFTER SHAKSPERE AND BEN JONSON.

45. The Decay of the Drama.

The decay of the drama began while Shakspere was alive; though the genius of Ben Jonson saved it from immediate ruin. On his death in 1637, there was no one who could really take his place; and the outbreak of the Civil Wars, and the closing of the theatres which followed, brought the Elizabethan drama to a definite end.

Beaumont and Fletcher, contemporaries of Jonson, both predeceased him by several years. Their busiest time was during the reign of James the First, when Fletcher produced thirty-six plays of his own, and fourteen more in conjunction with Beaumont. Fletcher was the better poet of the two; while Beaumont seems to have possessed more keen appreciation. Hence it was generally said that Fletcher invented and Beaumont criticised; though the actual division of work between them was never accurately known. Their friendship had begun at the time that they both contributed to the laudatory verses written for Jonson's *Volpone*; and continued until the death of Beaumont, in 1616, whom Fletcher survived for some nine years.

Beaumont went to Oxford, and Fletcher to Cambridge. Beaumont took no degree; entering at the Inner Temple while still quite young. He had intended to follow the profession of his father, Sir Francis Beaumont, who was a Justice of Common Pleas; but on going up to London was quickly drawn into the world of letters, which he frequented with more ardour than the world of law. Beaumont became a great friend of Ben Jonson, and charmed him with the verses which he contributed to *Volpone*. In return, the elder man wrote to the younger,

> "How I do love thee, Beaumont, and thy muse,
> That unto me dost such religion use!
> How I do fear myself, that am not worth
> The least indulgent thought thy pen drops forth!"

her's father was the head of Benet College, Cambridge, rpus College; and eventually became Bishop of London.

His son John did not enter any Inn of Court; and drifted into the career of a dramatist when he was about twenty-seven. He seems to have been writing for the stage for four years, when he first met Beaumont.

Their plays very clearly marked the difference that was coming over the stage. They dealt with aspects of English life which had been left untouched by both Shakspere and Ben Jonson; and the opinion of them expressed by Dryden is curious and interesting. "Beaumont and Fletcher," he wrote, "understood and imitated much better than Shakspere the conversation of gentlemen whose quickness of wit in repartee no poet can ever paint as they have done. Humour, which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe."

The work of both did much to weaken the blank verse which was brought into the drama by Gascoigne, and had been so much improved by Marlowe and Shakspere. They increased the number of lines with double, or feminine, endings, by which their verse gained in freedom and elegance, and became more suited to comedy than to tragedy. Their male characters represented the young men of the Stuart Court; their women were either very virtuous or very bad. Still they never descended to the coarse buffoonery of the inferior writers of the day. Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, produced in 1610, was a play of taste and morality, a pastoral story of maiden innocence dainty in its verses and pure in its design. The best of the work is to be seen in it and in *Philaster*, the *Maid's Tragedy*, the *Knight of Malta*, and the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*.

Philaster, the hero of the drama, is heir to the throne of Sicily, which the King of Calabria has usurped. Philaster, permitted to remain at the Court, falls in love with the Princess Arethusa, the usurper's daughter. Another young lady is desperately enamoured of Philaster; but knowing that her case is hopeless, disguises herself as a page, and contrives to enter his service. He has not the least suspicion of his new page's identity; and thinking that she is a charming boy, sends her, as a gift, to the Princess.

A certain ill-natured woman has a grudge against the Princess, and contrives to spread a number of reports concerning her and the new page. Bellario, having taken a vow not to reveal her sex, can do nothing to expose these falsehoods. Prince Philaster is foolish enough to credit the stories, and in his wrath inflicts a wound upon the page. In order to shield the Prince, whom she dearly loves, Bellario declares that the wound was given her because she was attempting to murder the Princess. Thereupon, both Prince Philaster and Bellario are

cast into prison, and the Princess earnestly begs that she may be their gaoler. This is granted to the Princess; who, when she appears in court, boldly declares:

> "This gentleman,
> The prisoner that you gave me, has become
> My keeper, and through all the bitter throes
> Your jealousies and his ill-fate have wrought him
> Thus nobly hath he struggled; and at length
> Avowed here my dear husband."

The king is furious, and casts them into prison again. Then the people rise on behalf of Prince Philaster; who, helped by Arethusa, undertakes the work of government. Bellario, freed from her vow, by the marriage of the Princess, is able to declare her personality, and so escapes the vengeance of the king. The story is absolutely impossible; it is nevertheless told with real tragical power.

The frankly humorous side of Beaumont and Fletcher's work is shown in their burlesque comedy of the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*. This was written in reproof of the prevalent taste for romances. Cervantes some few years previously had rebuked this same taste in *Don Quixote*, while Beaumont and Fletcher's burlesque was directed against Spenser's *Faerie Quene*.

The play is a clever mixture of comedy and burlesque. A company of actors is just about to begin a performance, and the speaker of the prologue is delivering his oration, when a Citizen leaps from his seat in the pit on to the stage, and stopping the actor, demands that a drama shall be given which will "present something notably in honour of the commons of the city." The actor is quite willing to play any play that the Citizen would like; and the Citizen's wife, who has been left in the pit, screams out to her husband that she wants the story of the Lion being killed by the Pestle. To keep her quiet, the Citizen has his wife lifted on to the stage, where she sits with great dignity upon a stool. She strongly recommends her husband's apprentice, Ralph, to the company of actors, and declares him to be the one best fitted for the leading part. The troupe are quite willing to humour her, and with the admission of Ralph into the company, the performance of the *Knight of the Burning Pestle* begins.

John Marston and Thomas Dekker, who were mentioned in connection with the *Poetaster*, were most industrious playwrights. Marston's tragedies, with the exception of the *Malcontents*, were too bombastic to have any long life. Dekker's work was far better, and his lyric verse is graceful and dainty. His *Lullaby*, addressed to some little children, in the play of *Patient Grissel*, is one of the prettiest a poet ever wrote.

"Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,
Smiles awake you when you rise.
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby;
Rock them, rock them, lullaby.

"Care is heavy, therefore sleep you,
You are care, and Care must keep you.
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby;
Rock them, rock them, lullaby."

George Chapman, the author of a good many plays, is better known as the translator of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. He used for the *Iliad* a metre unusual in English, a line of fourteen syllables, arranged in rhyming couplets. The *Odyssey* was written in the ordinary ten syllable heroic verse. The passage quoted is typical of the manner in which Chapman treated the original. Jove, having called a court of Gods together, forbids them to give any help whatever to either Greek or Trojan. He then descends from Heaven to Mount Ida, to watch the course of the fight.

"This said, his brass-hooved wingéd horse he did to chariot bind,
Whose crests were fringed with manes of gold; and golden garments shined
On his rich shoulders; in his hand he took a golden scourge
Divinely fashion'd, and with blow their willing speed did urge
Mid way betwixt the earth and heaven; to Ida then he came,
Abounding in delicious springs, and nurse of beasts untame,
Where, on the mountain Gargarus, men did a fane erect
To his high name, and altars sweet; and there his horse he check'd,
Dissolv'd them from his chariot, and in a cloud of jet
He cover'd them, and on the top took his triumphant seat,
Beholding Priam's famous town, and all the fleet of Greece."

Dissolved, loosened.

The most prolific of this group of dramatists was Thomas Heywood, who either wrote, or had a large share, in over two hundred plays. He was remarkable for the pure tone of his work, for his pathos, and for the ingenuity of his situations.

Thomas Middleton, chiefly famous for *The Changeling*, an effective play, though with horrible scenes, was also the writer of the *Game of Chess*, produced in 1624. This drama dealt with the much-debated topic of Prince Charles' proposed Spanish marriage. Black and white kings represented the sovereigns and ministers of England and Spain. The play was audacious; for the Spaniards, whom James was known to favour, were shown as being thoroughly discomfited.

John Webster is celebrated for the *White Devil* and the *Duchess of Malfi*, two dramas of tragic passions and crimes.

Webster's power lay in his skill of character drawing; and though he gives most elaborate pictures of wicked people, he never goes beyond the limits of nature. However much they may be steeped in sin, they are always possible human beings.

With the work of Massinger, Ford, and Shirley, the Elizabethan drama expires. The work of all three, however, was better than that of their immediate predecessors; and by them, an unsatisfactory period was brought to a dignified conclusion.

Philip Massinger, born at Salisbury about 1584, was the son of a man in the Earl of Pembroke's household. In 1602 he entered at St Alban's Hall, Oxford, and stayed there for four years, when the death of his father obliged him to leave. He went up to London, and made his living by the writing of plays, undergoing many sad experiences of poverty and want.

Massinger's plays are remarkable for their unusual earnestness of tone; their power of reflection; and their delineation of tender emotions. Their language is musical, and often stately. They show more care and elaboration than do those of Beaumont and Fletcher, to whom Massinger is a worthy rival. His style is natural and easy; and his plots, if sometimes intricate, are always connected. His characters are happily drawn; not so strongly as Jonson's, but more truly. Of wit, he has none; of sublimity, little; nor has he power over the passions. He inspires pity; yet never draws tears. He makes no efforts to soar to heights of fancy. He dwells among men; and describes them with feeling and discrimination.

He probably never married, and his death, which took place in 1640, in his fifty-sixth year, was mysterious and lonely. He went one night to his bed in apparently good health, and in the morning was found dead. He seems to have had no one to care for him, or to mark the slow decay from which he suffered. He was interred in the Churchyard of St. Saviour's, and the entry of the parish register runs, "Buried, Philip Massinger, a stranger."

Sir Giles Overreach, in *A New Way to pay Old Debts*, is the best of Massinger's character studies. Sir Giles has taken advantage of the wild living of his nephew, Francis Wellborn, to supply him lavishly with money, and so to obtain mortgages over his estates. When the mortgages are not paid off, he turns his nephew adrift. Wellborn is then befriended by a rich widow, Lady Allworth. Sir Giles seeks to marry his daughter, Margaret, to a Lord Lovell. Her real lover is Lady Allworth's son; and after various intrigues, Sir Giles finds himself deprived of his ill-gotten gains, with his hopes for his daughter's marriage entirely shattered, and his victim, Francis, restored to good fortune. The sudden accumulation of failures drives him mad;

his daughter and Allworth inherit his estates, and Wellborn is restored to all his own. To Lord Lovell, he says:

> "There is something else,
> Besides the re-possession of my land,
> And payment of my debts, that I must practise.
> I had a reputation, but 'twas lost
> In my loose course; and until I redeem it
> Some noble way, I am but half made up.
> It is a time of action; if your worship
> Will please confer a company upon me
> In your command, I doubt not in my service
> To king and country, but I shall do something
> That may make me right again."

Massinger's other famous plays are the *Virgin Martyr*, the *Maid of Honour*, and the *Duke of Milan*.

Of John Ford very little is known. He came of a good Devonshire family, and studied law at the Middle Temple. He began his career as a dramatist about 1610, and seems to have remained in London until 1640. Then there is a faint tradition that he returned to Islington, his native place, and lived to a great age. He appears to have been a man of a melancholy, if not irritable temperament. A contemporary, stringing verses together on his friends, has left us this couplet:

> "Deep in a dump John Ford alone was got,
> With folded arms, and melancholy hat."

His special power was that of dealing with gloomy, and sometimes even monstrous things. Hence his skill in comedy was small, while his tragedies gave him a great name.

His chief plays are the *Broken Heart*, the *Lover's Melancholy*, *Love's Sacrifice*, and an excellent play, the best since Shakspere, on the career of *Perkin Warbeck*. Of these, in all ways, the *Broken Heart* is the finest. Calantha, the Princess of Sparta, whose death gives the play its name, is loved by Ithocles, and loves him in return. Orgilus resolves to prevent their marriage, for Ithocles had forced his sister Penthea, who had been betrothed to Orgilus, into an unhappy union with another. Orgilus determines to murder Ithocles; and does so, perishing himself in the attempt. Calantha, who has now inherited the kingdom, determines to slay herself on the body of her betrothed. She prays silently at the altar where his corpse is lying; and rises, declaring that at last the gods are merciful. Then, bending over the cold body of Ithocles, she cries:

> "Now turn I to thee, thou shadow,
> Of my contracted lord; bear witness all,
> I put my mother's wedding ring upon
> His finger; 'twas my father's last bequest;
> Thus I new marry him, whose wife I am;

Death shall not separate us. O my lords,
I but deceived your eyes with antic gesture,
When one news straight came huddling on another,
Of death, and death, and death; still I danced forward,
But it struck home, and here, and in an instant.
Be such mere women, who with shrieks and outcries
Can vow a present end to all their sorrows,
Yet live to court new pleasures, and outlive them:
They are the silent griefs which cut the heart-strings.
Let me die smiling. One kiss on those cold lips, my last,
. . . Command the voices
Which wait at the altar, now to sing the song
I fitted for my end."

DIRGE.

Chorus—Glories, pleasures, pomps, delights, and ease
Can but please
The outward senses, when the mind
Is or untroubled, or by peace refined.

First Voice—Crowns may flourish and decay,
Beauties shine, but fade away.

Second Voice—Youth may revel, yet it must
Lie down on a bed of dust.

Third Voice—Earthly honours flow and waste,
Time alone doth change and last.

Chorus—Sorrows mingled with contents prepare
Rest for care;
Love only reigns in death, though art
Can find no comfort for a broken heart.

The last note of the Elizabethan plays is to be heard in James Shirley, who was about nine years old when Elizabeth died. He wrote as a dramatist through the reign of Charles the First, and lived into the days of Charles the Second. He was born in London, and at twelve years old was sent to the Merchant Taylor's School. It is said that he went first to Oxford and then to Cambridge, where he took his degrees, and was appointed to a living at or near St. Albans. He remained there for a very short time, as from conscientious motives he joined the Roman Catholic church. Two years afterwards, he went to London, and turned his attention to the writing of plays. Queen Henrietta Maria took especial notice of him, and he made a considerable income. This was entirely destroyed when Parliament, in 1642, ordered the suppression of stage plays. Shirley then accepted the invitation of his friend, the Earl of Newcastle, to join in the war; and he remained in the Royal Army until the King's cause was lost. Returning to London, he lived in obscurity, going back to his old work of teaching; until after the Restoration, when the theatres were

re-opened, and several of his pieces were revived with great success. He would not, however, attempt the writing of any more dramatic poetry. A degenerate race of playwrights had arisen, from whom Shirley turned away in disdain.

A dreadful end fell upon Shirley and his wife. At the time of the Great Fire they were compelled to fly from their habitation, near Fleet Street, to the parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, where, "being in a manner overcome with affrightments, disconsolations, and other miseries, occasioned by that fire and their losses, they both died within the compass of a natural day; whereupon their bodies were both buried in one grave belonging to the said church of St. Giles, on the 29th of October, 1666."

Of his plays, *The Traitors* is the best; though the *Maid's Revenge*, *Love's Cruelty*, the *Lady of Pleasure*, and the *Gamester* are all good. He had a thorough knowledge of the art of pleasing his audience. He was never obscure; his incidents are plentiful, the characters numerous, and his scenes fresh and full of animation. There was not much originality or wit in his mind—he was a man of essentially poetical feeling, and made his characters express pure thoughts in pure language.

This quality is to be found in the dirge from the *Contention of Ajax and Ulysses.*

"The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against Fate—
Death lays his icy hand on kings.
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

"Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill,
But their strong nerves at last must yield,
They tame but one another still.
Early or late
They stoop to fate
And must give up their murmuring breath
When they, poor captives, creep to death.

"The garlands wither on your brow—
Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon Death's purple altar now
See where the victor-victim bleeds.
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust."

46. Summary of the Stages of the Drama from Sackville, 1535, to Shirley, 1666.

We must here take a brief retrospect of the stages of the drama as they occur between the days of Sackville and the death of Shirley. Nicholas Udall, in 1540, produced the first English comedy, and Sackville, in 1562, the first English tragedy. The Latin influences of the time are seen in both of these, while Gascoigne's and Whetstone's plays were touched by the Italian.

Then came the quick development of the drama as written by university men, of whom Lyly, Greene, Peele, and Marlowe were types. They brought into their work a true knowledge of the classics, and did not let themselves be influenced merely by classical rules. To Shakspere classical learning was denied, but his natural genius stood him in better stead. After his death the example of Ben Jonson showed how the use of attainment alone destroyed the effect of natural feeling.

After Jonson, we find a body of men who were for some time contemporaries of Shakspere, and survived him. They never attained to anything like his eminence, though in their hands the drama was fairly safe. When the Puritans closed the theatres, dramatic writing lay dormant; and its subsequent history belongs to a later period.

XIV. PROSE AND POETRY BETWEEN 1590 AND 1680.

47. Minor Poets.

The writers of miscellaneous literature between Spenser and Milton fall into various groups. The first may be called that of the followers of Spenser; the second of men who, striking out a line for themselves, became the Satirists, by far the most important of these groups; the third, the prose writers who succeeded Hooker and Bacon, and with whom Bunyan has to be included, on account of his attachment to the Puritan feeling; the fourth, the Lyrists, Cavaliers, or else writers on religious subjects; the fifth and last, another group of minor poets, who act as fore-runners to the succeeding age.

Sir Edward Dyer, an Oxford man, and ambassador to Denmark, was famous in his day for the writing of elegies. He is now chiefly remembered by a short poem, *My Mind to me a Kingdom is*, a song of sweet and plaintive content. The little ode to *Phillis, the Fair Shepherdess*, is full of humour.

> "My Phillis hath the morning sun,
> At first to look upon her;
> And Phillis hath morn-waking birds,
> Her rising still to honour.

My Phillis hath prime feather'd flowers
That smile when she treads on them;
And Phillis hath a gallant flock,
That leaps since she doth own them.
But Phillis hath too hard a heart,
Alas! that she should have it!
It yields no mercy to desert,
Nor grace to those that crave it.
Sweet sun, when thou look'st on,
Pray her regard my moan!
Sweet birds, when you sing to her,
To yield some pity, woo her!
Sweet flowers, that she treads on,
Tell her, her beauty dreads one.
And if in life her love she nill agree me,
Pray her, before I die, she will come see me."

Henry Constable, a close friend of Sidney, is a more important man than Dyer, and his sonnets to *Diana* form a beautiful series. The following one was prefixed to Sidney's *Apology for Poetry*:

"Give pardon, blessed soul! to my bold cries,
If they, importune, interrupt thy song,
Which now with joyful notes thou sing'st among
The angel quiristers of th' heavenly skies.
Give pardon eke, sweet soul! to my slow cries,
That since I saw thee now it is so long;
And yet the tears that unto thee belong
To thee as yet they did not sacrifice;
I did not know that thou were dead before,
I did not feel the grief I did sustain;
The greater stroke astonisheth the more,
Astonishment takes from us sense of pain:
I stood amaz'd when others' tears begun,
And now begin to weep when they have done."

Michael Drayton turned to history for his inspiration, and wrote of the *Barons' Wars*, in eight line stanzas, and *Polyolbion*, in rhyming Alexandrines, dealing with the historical and geographical features of England. His sonnets contain the following remarkable poem:

"Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part—
Nay, I have done: you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.

"Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.

"Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath
When his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,
When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And innocence is closing up his eyes,
Now, if thou would'st, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover."

Robert Southwell, a Jesuit priest, wrote a number of religious poems. The best of them was *St. Peter's Complaint*, distinguished for its curious imagery, similar to that employed by Shakspere in his *Lucrece*. This likeness of method may be accounted for by the poems being contemporary. Southwell was executed in 1594 at the age of little over thirty. Two stanzas from *Time goes by Turns*, are well worth notice:

"The sea of Fortune doth not ever flow,
She draws her favours to the lowest ebb;
Her time hath equal times to come and go,
Her loom doth weave the fine and coarsest web;
No joy so great but runneth to an end,
No hap so hard but may in time amend.

"Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring,
No endless night, yet nor eternal day;
The saddest birds a season find to sing,
The roughest storm a calm may soon allay;
Thus with succeeding turns, God tempereth all,
That man may hope to rise, yet fear to fall."

In the reign of Elizabeth there had lived two brothers, Richard and Giles Fletcher. Richard Fletcher became D.D., and was Bishop of Bristol, Worcester and London. His son, John Fletcher, was the dramatist of James the First's reign, who co-operated with Beaumont. Giles Fletcher, brother to the bishop, acted as Commissioner for Queen Elizabeth in Scotland, Germany and the Low Countries. He went as English Commissioner to Russia, and published a book on the Russian Commonwealth, dedicated to the Queen, which declared that the Tartars were the lost tribes of Israel. The book was suppressed lest it should give offence to the Tzar. Doctor Fletcher had two sons, Phineas and Giles, who were both admirers and followers of Spenser; Giles being best known by his poem of *Christ's Victory and Triumph*, written in an eight-lined stanza of his own invention:

"At length an agèd sire far off he saw,
Come slowly footing: every step he guessed
One of his feet he from the grave did draw;
Three legs he had, that made of wood was best;
And all the way he went he ever blest
With benedictions, and with prayers store;
But the bad ground was blessèd ne'er the more:
And all his head with snow of age was waxen hoar."

The poem is full of inspiration, and has a wealth of language and imagery. It is interesting at the present day by reason of its being the forerunner of the Pre-Raphaelite movement of the nineteenth century. The work of Rossetti, Dante and Christina,

with its word painting and musical expression, often reminds the reader of the work of Giles Fletcher.

Phineas Fletcher wrote an allegorical poem called *The Purple Island*, which discoursed, in seven-line stanzas, of the body and soul of man.

William Browne's *Shepherd's Pipe*, published in 1614, was a pastoral, gracefully written in the heroic couplet, and particularly happy in the descriptions of nature and in the pictures of country life. The poem is a purely natural piece of work done for nature's own sake, free from all mixture of political or doctrinal theory.

George Wither was Browne's great friend, and seems to have written part of the *Shepherd's Pipe*. His first valuable production was *The Shepherd's Hunting*, in which he used a seven-syllabled line, and handled it with great ease and felicity.

"If thy verse do bravely tower,
As she makes wing she gets power;
Yet the higher she doth soar,
She's affronted still the more,
Till she to the high'st hath passed;
Then she rests with fame at last.
Let nought, therefore, thee affright,
But make forward in thy flight. . . .
Pendants shall not tie my strains
To our antique poets' veins,
As if we in latter days
Knew to love, but not to praise.
Being born as free as these,
I will sing as I shall please,
Who as well new paths may run
As the best before have done."

The example of these two poets, Browne and Wither, largely influenced the work of Keats at the beginning of the present century, who was led to admire them by Leigh Hunt.

48. The Three Satirists, 1593-1598.

We come now to the second group of minor poets, Joseph Hall, John Marston, and John Donne. Hall modelled himself on Juvenal, and claimed to be the first of the English satirists, a claim violently disputed by Marston. The disputants forgot that Gascoigne had really preceded them both. Hall has a distinct command over the heroic couplet; his power of invective was considerable. His language is often coarse, and his constant fault-finding is wearisome.

The Golden Age.

"Time was, and that was termed the time of gold,
When world and time were young that now are old.

Time was, that whiles the autumn fall did last,
Our hungry sires gaped for the fallen mast
Of the Dodonian oaks.
Could no unhusked acorn leave the tree,
But there was challenge made whose it might be.
And if some nice and licorous appetite
Desir'd more dainty dish of rare delight,
They scal'd the storèd crab with claspèd knee,
Till they had sated their delicious eye:
Or search'd the hopeful thicks of hedgy rows
For briery berries, or haws, or sourer sloes.
Or when they meant to fare the fin'st of all,
They lick'd oak leaves bespread with honey-fall."

A Deserted Mansion.

"Beat the broad gates, a goodly hollow sound
With double echoes doth again rebound;
But not a dog doth bark to welcome thee,
Nor churlish porter canst thou chafing see,
All dumb and silent, like the dead of night,
Or dwelling of some sleepy Sybarite.
The marble pavement hid with desert weed,
With houseleek, thistle, dock, and hemlock seed. . . .
Look to the towered chimnies, which should be
The windpipes of good hospitality,
Through which it breatheth to the open air,
Betokening life and liberal welfare;
Lo! there the unthankful swallow takes her rest,
And fills the tunnel with her circled nest."

Dodonian, belonging to the famous forest of Dodona, in Greece, where the oak-trees and the doves delivered oracles.

Licorous, eager, greedy.

Houseleek, a succulent plant generally found on old walls, very tenacious of life in both drought and heat. Known also as the Aye-green (ever-green).

Of John Marston's private life nothing is known. His satires have obtained more recognition than they really deserve. They are specimens of vicious satirical work, done in an age which was too satisfied with itself to tolerate satire. Marston, in his own personality, shows something of the same spirit. He abuses everything, and then abuses himself. His plays contain far better and more wholesome work than does his poetry. The verses of Marston and Hall date from about 1598.

To Detraction.

"Foul canker of fair virtuous action,
Vile blaster of the freshest blooms on earth,
Envy's abhorrèd child, Detraction
I here expose to thy all-tainting breath
The issue of my brain: snarl, rail, bark, bite;
Know that my spirit scorns Detraction's spite.

"Know that the Genius, which attendeth on
And guides my powers intellectual,
Holds in all vile repute Detraction.
My soul—an essence metaphysical,
That in the basest sort scorns critic's rage
Because he knows his sacred parentage—

"My spirit is not puff'd up with fat fume
Of slimy ale, nor Bacchus' heating grape;
My mind disdains the dungy muddy scum
Of abject thoughts and Envy's raging hate.
'True Judgment slight regards Opinion,
A sprightly wit disdains Detraction.'

"A partial praise shall never elevate
My settled censure of mine own esteem;
A canker'd verdict of malignant hate
Shall ne'er provoke me, worse myself to deem.
Spite of despite, and rancour's villany,
I am myself, so is my poesy."

John Donne was born in 1573, the son of a London tradesman. He was brought up at home until his eleventh year, and then he was sent to Hart Hall, Oxford. Here he remained for three years; proceeding to Cambridge, where he spent three years more. He could not take a degree, for his relations, who were Roman Catholics, would not permit him to assent to the oath. He left Cambridge for London, and read law at Lincoln's Inn; and his mind being much disturbed by the current controversies, he made a special study of the religious disputes of the time. In 1596 and 1597 he was with the Earl of Essex in his expeditions, spending some years afterwards in Italy and Spain; and "returned perfect in their languages." He became secretary to Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, and fell in love with Anne More, a niece of Lady Ellesmere, who lived in the Chancellor's household. Her father, hearing of this, carried the young lady away to her own home; but a secret marriage with Donne had been effected, and Donne was for a time imprisoned. On his release, he sued at law to recover his wife, but when she came to him, his means were nearly exhausted. He lived for some years, virtually supported by the kindness of his kinsmen, until it was his good fortune to be presented to the king. James was delighted with Donne who, at the king's request, wrote a book on the oaths of supremacy and allegiance. The king was so pleased that he insisted on Donne becoming a clergyman; and instantly making him his chaplain, ordered the University of Cambridge to create him a Doctor of Divinity.

For the rest of his life Donne was prosperous and successful. He became Dean of St. Paul's and Vicar of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West; and died in his fifty-eighth year.

Donne's satires—graphic pictures of the days of James the

First—were much admired by his contemporaries. His other poems belonged to the Metaphysical School, a term which requires some explanation. The poetry of Elizabeth's reign had been remarkable for the unity of its spirit and the love for England and the queen. These had acted as a bond sufficiently strong to keep her subjects together, even if, on minor points, they did not agree. When Elizabeth was dead, the political quarrel between the Royalists and their opponents, and the religious quarrel between the Church and the Puritans, became so keen and so distinctly marked, that England was no longer a united country. It separated into sections; and the poets were affected to a considerable degree. Many among them laboured after unusual turns of thought which "rested on some equivocation of language or exceedingly remote analogy." Such playing with the language had begun in the fantastic books of the *Euphues* and *Arcadia* school; though their influence had died down, owing to the strong common sense of the Shaksperean drama. It arose once more towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, and became very powerful in the days of the Stuarts; until, as we shall see later on, a second reaction brought about the clear thought and direct expression of Dryden and Pope.

In the days of Donne the evil movement was at its height. The speculations in philosophy, the elaborate conceits, the strained similes, and the fantastic images are all to be found in his work; he, however, was the first man in England to give full expression to the movement, though Hall and Marston had preceded him. Several of his lyrics, in spite of their unnatural expression show a vivid fancy and a real gift.

Song.

"Go and catch a falling star,
Tear up alive a mandrake root,
Tell me where all times past are,
Or who cleft the Devil's foot;
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,
Or to keep off Envy's stinging,
And find
What wind
Serves to advance an honest mind.

"If thou be'st born to strange sights,
Things invisible go see,
Ride ten thousand days and nights
Till age snow white hairs on thee;

Mandrake, a plant with a strange fleshy root somewhat resembling a human body. It was supposed to have feeling like an animal, and screamed frightfully when pulled up by the root. Those who heard the screams went mad.

Then, when thou return'st, will tell me
All strange wonders that befell thee,
And swear
No where
Lives a woman true and fair.

"If thou find'st one, let me know,
Such a pilgrimage were sweet;
Yet do not, I would not go,
Though at next door we might meet;
Though she were true when you met her,
And last when you wrote your letter,
Yet she
Will be
False, ere I come, to two or three."

Equally strange, too, are Donne's bequests in

The Will.

"My constancy I to the planets give,
My truth to them who at the court do live
Mine ingenuity and openness
To Jesuits; to buffoons my pensiveness;
My silence to any, who abroad hath been;
My money to a Capuchin.
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by appointing me
To love there, where no love receiv'd can be.
Only to give to such as have an incapacity.

"My faith I give to Roman Catholics;
All my good works unto the schismatics
Of Amsterdam; my best civility
And courtship, to a university;
My modesty I give to shoulders bare;
My patience let gamesters share.
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by making me
Love her that holds my love disparity,
Only to give to those that court my gifts indignity. . . .

"To him for whom the passing bell next tolls,
I give my physic books; my written rolls
Of moral counsels I to Bedlam give;
My brazen medals unto them which live
In want of bread; to them which pass among
All foreigners, my English tongue.
Thou, Love, by making me love one
Who thinks her friendship a fit portion
For younger lovers, does my gifts thus disproportion.

"Therefore I'll give no more; but I'll undo
The world by dying; because love dies too.
Then all your beauties will be no more worth
Than gold in mines, where none can draw it forth;
And all your graces no more use shall have
Than a sun-dial on a grave.
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by making me
Love her who doth neglect both me and thee,
To invent and practise this one way to annihilate all three."

Disparity, of insufficient quality.

49. Prose Writers between 1577 and 1679.

The prose works that appeared during these years had no claim to any marked Elizabethan feeling, as had so much of the poetry; they all rather worked on their own lines, each striving after a good prose expression, and therefore did a very useful work for English literature. None of the writers were great in prose, as were their predecessors, Hooker and Bacon, with the exception of one remarkable man, John Bunyan. The acquirement of a polished style, not distinguished by originality or genius, and merely the result of a painstaking scholarship, was reached about the middle of the century by Hobbes.

To take the few books that can be mentioned here in their chronological order, the first of these new efforts at prose is Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621. It is a quaint and charming volume in an avowedly archaic style, examining all the causes, the results, and the remedies of every form of melancholy, and interspersing the would-be science with comment upon the world at large.

Side by side with this may be put the *Religio Medici* of Sir Thomas Browne, 1642, full of learning and Latinisms. The religion of the physician was based on the acceptance of true scientific knowledge, and the absolute necessity for genuine and reliable research. Modern science has been compelled to change many of Sir Thomas Browne's views; but his book remains as a piece of fine writing, and a study of the working of a good man's mind.

We pass into a different atmosphere when we turn to the work of Jeremy Taylor, a writer distinguished for sound knowledge and eloquent style. In 1647 he published his *Liberty of Prophesying*, a plea for liberty of interpretation of the Scriptures being given to all, provided they accepted one standard of authority in the Apostle's Creed. A book better known to modern days is his *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, famous for the cadence of its sentences, its wealth of illustration, and its beautiful pathos. It is remarkable that Jeremy Taylor was quite unable to compose poetry. His spirit was always political, though he had no idea of the management of rhyme and metre, and no mastery over the language for the purposes of metrical expression. Heber well sums up the difference between two great men when he writes, "Hooker is the object of our reverence, and Jeremy Taylor of our love." Taylor was an ardent supporter of the Royalist cause, and underwent much suffering in the time of the Commonwealth. After the Restoration, he was made Bishop of Down and Connor, and eventually

of Dromore. A passage from the *Sermon on the Terrors of the Judgment* illustrates his power of vivid description.

"The persons who are to be judged: even you, and I, and all the world: kings and priests, nobles and learned, the crafty and the easy, the wise and the foolish, the rich and the poor, the prevailing tyrant and the oppressed party, shall all appear to receive their symbol; and this is so far from abating anything of its terror and our dear concernment, that it much increases it.

"The majesty of the Judge, and the terrors of the judgment, shall be spoken aloud by the immediate forerunning accidents, which shall be so great violences to the old constitutions of Nature, that it shall break her very bones, and disorder her till she be destroyed. St. Jerome relates out of the Jews' books that their doctors use to account fifteen days of prodigy immediately before Christ's coming, and to every day assign a wonder, any one of which if we should chance to see in the days of our flesh, it would affright us into the like thoughts which the old world had, when they saw the countries round about them covered with water, and the divine vengeance; or as those poor people near Adria and the Mediterranean Sea, when their houses and cities are entering into graves, and the bowels of the earth rent with convulsions and horrid tremblings. The sea, they say, shall rise fifteen cubits above the highest mountains, and thence descend into hollowness and a prodigious drought; and when they are reduced again to their usual proportions, then all the beasts and creeping things, the monsters and the usual inhabitants of the sea shall be gathered together, and make fearful noises to distract mankind: the birds shall mourn and change their songs into threnes and sad accents: rivers of fire shall rise from east to west, and the stars shall be rent into threads of light, and scatter like the beards of comets; then shall be fearful earthquakes, and the rocks shall rend in pieces, the trees shall distil blood, and the mountains and fairest structures shall return unto their primitive dust; the wild beasts shall leave their dens, and come into the companies of men, so that you shall hardly tell how to call them, herds of men or congregations of beasts; then shall the graves open and give up their dead, and those which are alive in nature and dead in fear shall be forced from the rocks whither they went to hide them, and from caverns of the earth where they would fain have been concealed; because their retirements are dismantled, and their rocks are broken into wider ruptures, and admit a strange light into their secret bowels; and the men being forced abroad into the theatre of horrors, shall run up and down distracted, and at their wits' end; and then some shall die, and some shall be changed; and by this time the elect shall be gathered together from the four quarters of the world, and Christ shall come along with them to judgment."

Threnes, dirges, lamentations.

A few words must be said of John Donne, the satirist, who by reason of his Letters, Essays and Sermons, written between 1620 and 1630, can claim a very high place among writers of prose. Though Donne's work in this direction is marked, like his poetry, by a sadness of temperament, it displays the best features of the Jacobean writing in its depth of thought, its knowledge, and its powers of imagination. In style Donne is almost equal to Jeremy Taylor, while his thought is even more

profound. An excellent critic has done well to point out the likeness, often overlooked, in the work of both Hooker and Donne. They had each a capacity for the arrangement of the paragraph, and skill in its execution.

Richard Baxter, writing in 1650, gained great fame for his ever-popular *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, a book that was at one time in nearly every English cottage; and Thomas Fuller, one of the most successful preachers of his age, wrote an excellent *Church History of Britain*, continuing the historical work begun by Raleigh and Bacon. He died shortly before the publication of a still better book, *The History of the Worthies of England*, which appeared in 1661.

The lighter side of this miscellaneous prose literature is represented by *The Compleat Angler* of 1653, written by Izaak Walton, a fascinating picture of rural life and scenery, bearing testimony to the great love of natural country life which has so marked the English people. Walton, after a successful career in trade, lived peacefully in the country, devoting himself to books and fishing. He married twice, first a descendant of Cranmer, and then a sister of Bishop Ken. He was a strong Royalist and Churchman, and loved nature with all his heart and soul. His book is celebrated for "its simplicity, its sweetness, its natural grace, and its happy intermixture of graver strains with the precepts of angling."

Promising as many of the books of this period were, the most important name of the time in prose literature is that of Thomas Hobbes. He was born in the year of the Armada, and after school days went up to the University of Oxford, which he left at the early age of twenty. He was a great reader of Greek, a practised writer in Latin, and worked hard at philosophy and science. Among his friends he counted Ben Jonson, Bacon, and Galileo. He was a faithful adherent to the Royalist cause, and in 1651, two years after Charles I.'s execution, he issued his book, *Leviathan; or the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil.* In this he unhesitatingly gives his views as to the respective rights of kings and people. The following extract shows the plain straightforwardness of his style:

"*The sovereign's action cannot be justly accused by the subject.*—Fourthly, because every subject is by this institution author of all the actions and judgments of the sovereign instituted; it follows that whatsoever he doth, it can be no injury to any of his subjects; nor ought he to be by any of them accused of injustice. For he that doth anything by authority from another, doth therein no injury to him by whose authority he acted: but by this institution of a commonwealth, every particular man is author of all the sovereign doth: and consequently he that complaineth of injury from his sovereign, complaineth of that whereof he himself is author; and therefore ought not to accuse any man but him-

self; no, nor himself of injury; because to do injury to one's self is impossible. It is true that they that have sovereign power may commit iniquity; but not injustice, or injury in the proper signification.

"*Whatever the sovereign doth is unpunishable by the subject.*—Fifthly, and consequently to that which was said last, no man that hath sovereign power can justly be put to death, or otherwise in any manner by his subjects punished. For seeing every subject is author of the actions of his sovereign, he punisheth another for the actions committed by himself."

The difference should be noticed between the clear and definite expression of Hobbes' sentences and the confused arrangement of both Milton's and Jeremy Taylor's.

We close this account of the intermediate period of prose work between the times of Milton and Dryden by including a book which seems to belong to quite a different period, because it was not published until 1678, four years after Milton was dead. In it was a distinct trace of the feelings of Elizabethan times. *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come*, written in gaol by John Bunyan, a poor man, a brazier by trade, is full of perfectly simple and natural writing, lightened with a wonderful fervour and honesty of belief. The allegory at which he worked was realised with the feeling of a dramatist. His characters, like the Pilgrims of Chaucer, were drawn from human beings and their every-day experiences, though they were all labelled with suggestive names—Wiseman, Talkative, Say-well, Obstinate, Pliable, and others of the same kind. "He was," as Macaulay says, "almost the only writer who ever gave to the abstract the interest of the concrete. . . . The mind of Bunyan was so imaginative that personifications, when he dealt with them, became men." *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a most remarkable specimen of fine work done by an entirely self-taught man.

The first part tells of Christian on his journey from this World to Heaven, and the second of how his widow and her four children seek to follow his example. Christian leaves home with his Burden on his back and his Book in his hand, and starts to find Eternal Life. His neighbours, Obstinate and Pliable, try to keep him back. He argues with them, and Pliable, coming only a little way, stumbles into the Slough of Despond, and struggles out at what he thinks is the safe side. Christian, after great efforts, frees himself from the mire, and continues in his toil. He enters the Strait Gate, fights with and defeats Apollyon, goes through many adventures in Vanity Fair, and nearly loses his life in Doubting Castle, where he is held prisoner by Giant Despair. At last he comes to the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and then, in the company of his friend Hopeful, crosses the deep waters, to meet with the reward of his purity and faith.

50. The Caroline Poets.

(1) The Lyrists, 1590-1674.

The lyric poets, known as the Cavaliers, rendered their work unique by charming grace. The first, and one of the most important of them, was Sir John Suckling, born in 1609, son of the Comptroller of James the First's household. He entered on active life by serving in the army of Gustavus Adolphus. During the reign of Charles the First, he became famous in London for his charming manners, his quick wit, and his power as a poet and dramatist. Four of his plays have survived, one known as *Aglaura*, possessing two fifth acts, so that it can be played as a tragedy, or as a comedy. *The Goblins*, a wild extravaganza, tells how a body of men, dismissed from decent society, lived in caverns near to a great city. Two tragedies, *Brennoralt* and *The Sad One*, are remarkable for their attempts to imitate Shakspere. Suckling's lyrics, in which he excels, turn upon the littlest things, yet are full of wonderful interest. A strong sense of humour is displayed in them, occasionally heightened by a touch of cynicism. Quick observation and neat expression are shown in the pieces quoted below.

Suckling devoted all his energy to the ardent support of the Royalist cause ; and when the Rebellion broke out, spent twelve thousand pounds in equipping cavalry to help the king. After the war, he refused to have anything more to do with England, and went over to France, where he died in 1642. The accounts of his death differ a great deal. Some declare that he was robbed by a servant, who wounded him fatally in a scuffle ; others that during his stay in France, he fell into the hands of the Inquisition, and was so cruelly tortured, that he took poison to put an end to his sufferings.

To The Honest Lover.

" Honest lover, whatsoever
If in all thy love there ever
Was one wav'ring thought, if thy flame
Were not still even, still the same,
Know this
Thou lov'st amiss ;
And to love true,
Thou must begin again, and love anew.

" If, when she appears i' the room
Thou dost not quake, and art struck dumb,
And, in striving thus to cover,
Dost not speak thy words twice over,
Know this,
Thou lov'st amiss. (*Refrain repeated.*)

"If fondly thou dost not mistake,
And all defects for graces take;
Perswad'st thyself that jests are broken,
When she hath little or nothing spoken;
Know this,
Thou lov'st amiss. (*Refrain repeated.*)

"If when thy stomach calls to eat,
Thou cutt'st not fingers 'stead of meat;
And with much gazing on her face,
Dost not rise hungry from the place,
Know this,
Thou lov'st amiss. (*Refrain repeated.*)

"If by this thou dost discover
That thou art no perfect lover;
And, desiring to love true,
Thou dost begin to love anew;
Know this
Thou lov'st amiss;
And to love true,
Thou *must* begin again, and love anew."

Send me back my Heart.

"I prithee, send me back my heart,
Since I cannot have thine;
For if from yours you will not part,
Why then shouldst thou have mine?

"Yet now I think on't, let it lie;
To find it were in vain;
For thou'st a thief in either eye,
Would steal it back again.

"Why should two hearts in one breast lie,
And yet not lodge together?
Oh, Love! where is thy sympathy,
If thus our hearts thou sever?

"But love is such a mystery,
I cannot find it out;
For when I think I'm best resolv'd,
I then am in most doubt.

"Then farewel care and farewel wo,
I will no longer pine;
For I'll believe I have her heart,
As much as she has mine."

Out upon it.

"Out upon it! I have lov'd
Three whole days together;
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fine weather.

"Time shall moult away his wings,
E'er he shall discover
In the whole wide world again
Such a constant lover.

"But the spite on't is, no praise
Is due at all to me;
Love with me had made no stays,
Had it been any but she.

"Had it any been but she,
And that very face,
There had been at least ere this
A dozen dozen in her place."

Richard Lovelace, the eldest son of Sir William Lovelace of Woolwich, was born in 1618, and educated at the Charterhouse and Oxford. He was remarkable for his good looks, and for the charm of his manner. Lovelace entered the army, and went through the Scottish expedition of 1639, afterwards living at Lovelace Place, his estate near Canterbury. When, in 1642, he was elected to go up to the House of Commons in support of the petition for restoring the king to his rights, the Parliament committed him to the Gate-house Prison at Westminster. His confinement did not last long, and gave him the opportunity of writing one of the best of his lyrics; being then released on bail, he lived in London, and worked hard in the cause of Charles the Second. In 1646 he served in the French army, and was wounded at Dunkirk; a false report of his death causing his lady-love to marry some one else. In 1648, he returned to England, to be soon a political prisoner again; and some ten years afterwards, he died in a London alley, only a few months before the Restoration.

His poems were chiefly addressed to Miss Lucy Sacheverell, the Lucasta (*lux casta*, chaste light) of his verses. In view of the sad mistake that she made, his farewell has a specially pathetic interest.

To Lucasta, on going beyond the Seas.

"If to be absent were to be
Away from thee;
Or that when I am gone
You or I were alone;
Then, my Lucasta, might I crave
Pity from blustering wind, or swallowing wave.

"But I'll not sigh one blast or gale
To swell my sail,
Or pay a tear to 'suage
The foaming blue-god's rage;
For whether he will let me pass
Or no, I'm still as happy as I was.

"Though seas and lands betwixt us both,
Our faith and troth,
Like separated souls,
All time and space controls;
Above the highest sphere we meet
Unseen, unknown, and greet as angels greet.

"So then we do anticipate
Our after-fate,
And are alive i' the skies,
If thus our lips and eyes
Can speak like spirits unconfin'd
In heaven, their earthy bodies left behind."

Thomas Carew belonged to the Gloucestershire branch of the famous Devonshire Carews. He was educated at Oxford; travelled; attended the court; admired Ben Jonson, and became gentleman of the Privy Chamber and cup-bearer to Charles the First. Carew wrote very little; though his lyrical poetry is some of the best in English; and in a time when verse was full of strange conceits, he always exercised a sound judgment and common sense. His verse shows an admirable mixture of the grace and freedom of his contemporaries and immediate predecessors, with a foretaste of the polish which was the mark of the generation. The earlier poets had too much of the former and too little of the latter. The later generation excelled in polish, yet had not so many pleasant things to say. Carew, holding himself in between the two extremes, preserved the merits of both and the defects of neither. Here are some pretty lines, which combine a pleasant conceit and a refined style:

Red and White Roses.

"Read in these roses the sad story
Of my hard fate, and your own glory;
In the white you may discover
The paleness of a fainting lover;
In the red, the flames still feeding,
On my heart the fresh wounds bleeding.
The white will tell you how I languish,
And the red express my anguish:
The white my innocence displaying,
The red my martyrdom betraying.
The frowns that on your brows resided
Have those roses thus divided;
Oh! let your smiles but clear the weather,
And then they both shall grow together."

Carew's *Elegy on Donne* is a remarkable piece of his more serious work, prophesying that Donne's influence will lead on to a healthier condition in English verse—a prophecy almost immediately fulfilled by the masculine writing of John Dryden.

(2) The Religious Writers.

Robert Herrick hardly ranks as a Cavalier, though all his life he was a true and fervent Royalist; he can be regarded as a connecting link between the world as shown by the Cavaliers, and the Church as treated by Herbert and Crashaw. Of his life little is known. He was born in 1591, the fourth son of a silversmith in Cheapside. He probably went to Westminster, and certainly to Cambridge; and was presented in 1629 to a living in Devonshire, four miles from Ashburton, where he spent the next seventeen years of his life. He lived a solitary life, attended by a faithful servant; and finding much consolation in a pet pig, whom he taught to drink out of a tankard. His verses are full of pretty touches of the country; yet he missed sadly the surroundings of a university society. One stanza shows a touch of spleen:

> "More discontents I never had,
> Since I was born, than here;
> Where I have been, and still am sad,
> In this dull Devonshire."

When the Parliament ejected him from his living, he hastened up to London, and published a volume entitled *Hesperides, the Children of the West*, a miscellaneous collection of the short poems that he had written during his weary years in Devonshire. He explains his book thus:

> "I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers,
> Of April, May, of June and July flowers;
> I sing of May-poles, hack-carts, wassails, wakes,
> Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes.
> I write of youth, of love, and have access
> By these to sing of cleanly wantonness.
> I sing of dews, of rains, and, piece by piece,
> Of balm, of oil, of spice, and ambergris.
> I sing of times trans-shifting; and I write
> How roses first came red, and lilies white.
> I write of groves, of twilight, and I sing
> The Court of Mab and of the Fairy King.
> I write of Hell; I sing, and ever shall,
> Of Heaven—and hope to have it after all."

Hack-cart, a cart drawn by a hack or nag.

There are many pretty verses on quaint country customs, and a strong delight shown by Herrick in healthy physical beauty, which he describes with an artist's touch. His best lyrics have a strain of melancholy, a feeling for the short life and passing away of earthly delights, and the hope that the recollections of happy days may not altogether be taken away. The lines *To Anthea* touch upon this note:

"Now is the time when all the lights are dim,
And thou, Anthea, must withdraw from him
Who was thy servant. Dearest, bury me
Under that holy-oak or gospel-tree,
Where, though thou see'st not, thou may'st think upon
Me, when thou yearly go'st in procession.
Or, for mine honour, lay me in that tomb
In which thy sacred relics shall have room;
For my embalming, sweetest, there shall be
No spices wanting, when I'm laid by thee."

His longing for a happy life and a peaceful death are even more clearly shown in the companion volume to the *Hesperides*, a collection of purely religious poems, known as the *Noble Numbers*. *The Litany to the Holy Spirit*, *The Thanksgiving to God for his House*, *The Place of the Blessed*, the lines entitled *To Find God*, and *On Heaven*, all show a side of Herrick's nature that has been far too often overlooked. We can hardly think ill of one who can write like this:

"Here, a little child, I stand,
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to Thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat and on us all.
Amen."

Paddock, a toad.

Herbert and Crashaw were two of the most distinguished writers of religious verse. George Herbert, born in 1593, was the younger brother of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. For some years he held the office of public orator at Cambridge, and then, taking holy orders, accepted a living at Bemerton, where he died in 1633. *The Temple*, his book of religious poems, was for long the favourite of its kind in England. Herbert had a good mastery of poetic form, but never dealt with any deep ideas. His thoughts, though well expressed, tended to become commonplace. His morality was always true and pure; and there was a feeling of manliness about his work, which irresistibly commended him to his readers. He never dealt with more than ordinary needs and daily emotions; but, writing at the period that he did, could make use of enough quaintness of conceit to brighten his verses; and this he contrived in a way that was always pleasing, for he never became extravagant or obscure.

The famous *Sweet Day, so Cool, so Calm, so Bright*, represents him, perhaps, at his best. He is stronger with regard both for thought and expression in

The Gifts of God.

"When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
'Let us,' said He, 'pour on him all we can
Let the world's riches, which dispersèd lie,
Contract into a span.'

"So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure;
When almost all was out, God made a stay;
Perceiving that alone of all His treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

"'For if I should,' said He,
'Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature,
So both should losers be.

"'Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness:
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast.'"

A man of a very different type was George Crashaw, the son of an Anglican clergyman with Protestant leanings. He was educated at the Charterhouse and Cambridge, where he became a fellow of Peterhouse. He was eventually deprived of his fellowship for not taking the covenant in 1644, upon which he journeyed to Rome, and becoming a Roman Catholic, was appointed to a canonry at Loretto. Here he died, six years later, a suspicion gaining ground that he was poisoned. He never seems to have revised or corrected his work; one of his poems, *The Flaming Heart*, a legend of St. Theresa, after lines of the poorest verse, breaks into an impassioned finale which has been regarded as "one of the most astonishing things in English or any other literature." The following stanzas will be sufficient evidence of Crashaw's descriptive power. They are taken from the poem of *The Weeper*, an address to Mary Magdalene.

"Not the soft gold which
Steals from the amber-weeping tree,
Makes sorrow half so rich
As the drops distilled from thee.
Sorrows best jewels lie in these
Caskets, of which Heaven keeps the keys.

"When sorrow should be seen
In her brightest majesty
(For she is a queen),
Then is she dressed by none but thee.
Then, and only then, she wears
Her richest pearls—I mean thy tears.

"Not in the evening's eyes,
When they red with weeping are
For the sun that dies,
Sits sorrow with a face so fair;
Nowhere but here did ever meet
Sweetness so sad, sadness so sweet."

51. The Forerunners to the New Age.

Three poets may now be regarded as forerunners of the New Age. Dryden declared that "nothing was so even sweet and flowing as Mr. Waller; nothing so majestic, so correct, as Sir John Denham; nothing so elevated, so copious, and so full of spirit as Mr. Cowley." Without accepting Dryden's opinion in full, it is of interest as marking the feeling of the time, and as showing what particular merit was attached to the name of each poet.

Edmund Waller inherited a great property, and after the training of Eton and Cambridge, entered Parliament at an early age. "His political and his poetical life," says Johnson, "began nearly together." Johnson then points out that the versification in his earliest poem, written in his eighteenth year, was exactly the same as appears in his last:

"With the sweet sound of this harmonious lay,
About the keel delighted dolphins play;
So sure a sign of sea's ensuing rage,
Which must anon this royal troop engage;
To whom sweet sleep seems more secure and sweet
Within the town commanded by our fleet."

These verses undoubtedly have the finish, and the neat closing of the sense with the line, which was regarded as necessary for the correct classical verse. They have, of course, no claim to be considered poetry in the sense that Chaucer's, Spenser's, and many other writers', was poetry. Poetry means a beautiful expression of thought, the best thought uttered in the best way. Classical verse, the heroic couplet, demanded only a correct assemblage of ten syllables in each line, with a recognised rhyme at the end of each couplet. It became, however, the standard verse in English, though very little poetry was written in it. Waller's example was followed by Denham, and the metre remained triumphant from Waller's day, the end of the seventeenth century, until the end of the eighteenth.

When Parliament met in 1640, after its long interval, Waller opposed the king; but on the breaking out of the Civil War, he sided with the Crown; and in 1643, being concerned in a Royalist plot, he fled to France. During the Protectorate, being a relation to Cromwell, he was recalled. Waller wrote, in reply, a *Panegyric to my Lord Protector*; and on Charles the

Second's restoration was ready to greet him with rhymes "Upon His Majesty's Happy Return." Waller sat in Parliament again, and Charles presented him to the valuable office of Provostship of Eton. He died in 1687, and was regarded, in the years before his death, as being one of the fathers of English poetry. One specimen of his lyric poetry will show him at his best:

To a Rose.

"Go, lovely Rose,
Tell her, that wastes her time and me
That now she knows
When I resemble her to thee
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

"Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

"Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired,
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

"Then die! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee,
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!"

Abraham Cowley, the posthumous child of a London stationer, was born in 1618. His mother struggled hard to get him well educated. She seems to have been a woman of cultivated taste, for the copy of Spenser which lay on her table gave the first liking for poetry to her boy. Abraham got admission to Westminster School; and in his fifteenth year appeared a volume by him entitled *Poetical Blossoms*, with his portrait at the age of thirteen; a tragedy on the story of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, written when he was ten; and another play, *Constantia and Philetus*, written when he was twelve.

In 1636 Cowley went to Cambridge, but seven years later he was turned out of the University, which was then strongly Parliamentarian, for daring to show his attachment to the Royal cause. He migrated to Oxford; and after its surrender followed the queen to Paris, when he was employed as court secretary. The influence of French poetry then probably caused him to turn from the methods of Spenser, to which he had adhered from his childhood, to those of Denham and Waller. By so doing he distinctly assisted to form a new school. A collection of his love-

poems appeared in 1647, and nine years later he returned to England, when a folio edition of all his writings was issued.

Cromwell, however, thoroughly distrusted him, in spite of an *Ode to Excellent Brutus*. Cowley therefore found it to his advantage to fly to France as soon as Cromwell died, and he could not return to England until the Restoration was an accomplished fact. He lived but seven years longer, dying in 1667. His volume of love-poems, published in 1647, had been known by the name of *The Mistress*. It consisted of a number of sets of verses in which Cowley paid his court to an imaginary fair lady. But it was filled to overflowing with the extraordinary conceits of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in their most exaggerated forms. Cowley, for instance, seeing that his Mistress' eyes looked upon him with a cold regard, and "observing at the same time their power of producing love in him, considers them as burning glasses made of ice; and finding himself able to live in the greatest extremities of love, concludes the torrid zone to be habitable." Yet there are passages in it which are far more worthy of respect.

"Love in her sunny eyes does basking play;
Love walks the pleasant mazes of her hair;
Love does on both her lips for ever stray,
And sows and reaps a thousand kisses there;
In all her outward parts Love's always seen;
But oh! he never went within.

. . . . . .

"With me, alas, quite contrary it fares;
Darkness and death lies in my weeping eyes,
Despair and paleness in my face appears,
And grief and fear, Love's greatest enemies;
But, like the Persian tyrant, Love within
Keeps his proud court, and ne'er is seen.

"By Heaven! I'll tell her boldly that 'tis she!
Why should she ashamed or angry be
To be beloved by me?
The gods may give their altars o'er,
They'll smoke but seldom any more,
If none but happy men may them adore."

The *Davideis*, a sacred poem of the troubles of David, and the *Pindaric Odes* are not compositions to which much attention need be paid. His *Anacreontics* were far better in their execution, the difficult eight-syllabled lines being managed with great skill. It is not, however, quite fair to judge all Cowley's poetry from the standpoint of these works. The better ones to look at are *A Vote* (signifying Wish), one of his earliest compositions; the lines *On the Death of Mr. Jordan*, a master at Westminster; and the *Ode on the Death of Mr. William Hervey*,—all excellent

and full of feeling. Two stanzas from the last named and some from the *Supplication* will best speak for themselves.

On the Death of Mr. William Hervey.

"Say, for you saw us, ye immortal lights,
How oft unwearied we have spent the nights,
Till the Ledœan stars, so famed for love,
Wondered at us from above.
We spent them not in toys, or lusts, or wine;
But search of deep philosophy,
Wit, eloquence, and poetry—
Arts which I loved, for they, my friend, were thine.

"Ye fields of Cambridge, our dear Cambridge, say
Have ye not seen us walking every day?
Was there a tree about that did not know
The love betwixt us two?
Henceforth, ye gentle trees, for ever fade,
Or your sad branches thicker join,
Or into darksome shades combine
Dark as the grave wherein my friend is laid."

A Supplication.

"Awake, awake, my Lyre!
And tell thy silent master's humble tale
In sounds that may prevail;
Sounds that gentle thoughts inspire;
Though so exalted she,
And I so lowly be,
Tell her, such different notes make all thy harmony.

"Hark, how the strings awake;
And, though the moving hand approach not near,
Themselves with awful fear
A kind of numerous trembling make.
Now all their forces try;
Now all thy charms apply;
Revenge upon her ear the conquests of her eye. . . .

"Sleep, sleep again, my lyre,
For thou canst never tell my humble tale
In sounds that will prevail,
Nor gentle thoughts in her inspire.
All thy vain mirth lay by,
Bid thy strings silent lie;
Sleep, sleep, my Lyre, and let thy master die."

Sir John Denham, born in Dublin in 1615, was the son of a Baron of the Exchequer; an idle undergraduate at Oxford, and a gambler during his time at Lincoln's Inn. This last accomplishment he managed to check, and then wrote an *Essay on Gaming* to prove its folly.

In 1641 he brought out his tragedy of *The Sophy*, or Sultan, which was acted privately at Blackfriars, but with such success that Waller said Denham was like the Irish Rebellion—he broke out when nobody in the least suspected it. The play was followed, two years later, by his poem of *Cooper's Hill*, a contemplative description of the view over the Thames and towards London from a hill in the neighbourhood of Windsor Castle. This poem is the first instance of vigorous rhythmical couplets, close in thought and nervous in language. The cadences are animated and various; but they were imitated and improved upon by the finer ear of Dryden. It is rare to find lines of any real beauty in Denham. At the same time it is equally difficult to come across any that are feeble or low. A few lines from *Cooper's Hill*, describing the stag's alarm at the approach of the hunt, show very plainly the principal characteristics of Denham's work.

"Roused with the noise, he scarce believes his ear,
Willing to think the illusions of his fear
Had given this false alarm; but straight his view
Confirms, that more than all he fears is true.
Betrayed in all his strengths, the wood beset,
All instruments, all arts of ruin met,
He calls to mind his strength, and then his speed.
His wingèd heels, and then his armèd head,
With these to avoid, with that his fate to meet;
But fear prevails, and bids him trust his feet.
So fast he flies, that his reviewing eye
Has lost the chasers, and his ear the cry;
Exulting, till he finds their nobler sense
Their disproportioned speed doth recompense;
Then curses his conspiring feet, whose scent
Betrays the safety which their swiftness lent."

Denham drew an ingenious comparison between the Thames and his poetry. He writes

"O, could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My bright example, as it is my theme;
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
Strong without rage; without o'erflowing full."

Denham died in 1668. He had been one of the Royalist exiles, and was employed abroad in assisting the Royalist cause until the Restoration of 1660.

Only one Puritan besides Milton obtained any distinction as a poet. This was Andrew Marvell, born in 1620, the son of a clergyman at Kingston-upon-Hull. At fifteen he was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated as a B.A. in 1638, and went abroad some time later, spending four years in foreign travel. This training stood him in good stead, for he learnt the languages of France, Holland, Italy, and Spain;

and when in 1653 Milton recommended him to the Parliament for appointment as his private secretary, he described Marvell, both from report and "personal converse," as of "singular desert"; and laid stress on his knowledge of continental languages, as well as having a good acquaintance with Latin and Greek. The appointment was not given to Marvell, so Milton sent him to Cromwell with an introduction; and Marvell made so strong an impression on Cromwell that in 1657 he did obtain the post of assistant-secretary to Milton for the Parliamentary government's foreign correspondence.

After the Restoration he sat as member for Hull, and made daring attacks upon whatever seemed to him to be tyrannous or criminal on the part of the government. The form which he selected for his satires was the heroic couplet, which he made far more effective than it had been in the hands of Waller. Satirical work in it had hardly been attempted since the rough verses of Donne, Hall, and Marston had appeared, and Marvell was the first to write regular satires in the Latin manner. The most important of these pieces are the *Last Instructions to a Painter* and the *Character of Holland.*

There was an extraordinary difference between his satires and the lovely garden poems which he had composed on his return to England from the continent. The picture of a little girl *In a Prospect of Flowers*, the *Girl describing her Fawn*, the *Thoughts in a Garden* are some among many poems which show a delicate humour united to thought which is at once simple and subtle. There is abundance of conceit and paradox, but these are imaginative and not, as in the case of most seventeenth poets, intellectual only. "There is a depth of feeling in Marvell, with descriptive power and melody; an airy and a tender grace which reminds us of the lighter manner of Milton." These are some of the stanzas from the *Prospect of Flowers*:

"See with what simplicity
This nymph begins her golden days!
In the green grass she loves to lie,
And there with her fair aspect tames
The wilder flowers, and gives them names;
But only with the roses plays,
And then does tell
What colours best become them, and what smell. . . .

"Meantime, whilst every verdant thing
Itself does as thy beauty charm,
Reform the errors of the spring;
Make that the tulips may have share
Of sweetness, seeing they are fair,
And roses of their thorns disarm;
But most procure
That violets may a longer age endure.

"But, O young beauty of the woods,
Whom Nature courts with fruits and flowers,
Gather the flowers, but spare the buds;
Lest Flora, angry at the crime
To kill her infants in their prime,
Should quickly make th' example yours;
And ere we see—
Nip in the blossom—all our hopes and thee."

52. Summary of the Period between 1590 and 1667.

After Spenser's death a very large amount of verse was written; but, with the exception of that which was done by one famous hand, little of it could be called poetry. It is curious to notice the varying interests of those who produced it. Sir Edward Dyer, for example, writes brightly and cheerfully, not as a man of letters but as a man of affairs. Constable gives us his tender love songs; Michael Drayton his patriotic verses; Southwell his laments for Roman Catholic England. Giles and Phineas Fletcher are religious poets of the Anglican Church; Wither and William Browne are lovers of the English countryside. A clever criticism has summed up this state of affairs by pointing out that Spenser's work reflected the spirit of the English Renaissance; while the miscellaneous poetry, touched by the Elizabethan influence, represented the whole of English life.

Dramatic writing, which hardly survived the loss of Shakspere, absolutely stopped under the Commonwealth; and when the theatres reopened, though a new school of play-writers sprang up, their work was often superseded by a return to the old Elizabethan dramas. The Rebellion, however, acted with good effect upon one branch of poetry. The writing of lyrics had been a favourite pastime in the days of Elizabeth, and was continued in the following reign. The results were pretty and graceful, but entirely wanting in set form and intention. The spirit of the Cavalier poets altered this. They made great use of lyrical poetry, basing it all upon a devoted attachment to king and country. Even their affections were subordinated to their feelings:

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more."

They gave a tone of firmness and set purpose to lyric poetry which had, by then, been wanting for many years.

The increase of political trouble developed the growth of satirical poetry; while the dislike of cultivated men to ceaseless strife led to the religious poetry of the Fletchers, George Herbert, Crashaw, and others. This became still more marked in the writings of Cowley and Waller.

The cause of so long a want of *purpose* seems to have been brought about by the fact that the greatest poet of the time was not recognised in his own age. Milton stands alone as a connecting link between the days of Elizabeth and of our own times. The years in which he actually lived, and those immediately following his death were hardly touched by him at all. His early poems were accepted by few but his own private friends. The most important twenty years of his life were consumed in political and religious disputes. The real message that he had to give to the world was not delivered until 1667, and by then some seventy years had elapsed since Spenser's death.

It is probably this fact that accounts for the uncertain position of all branches of literature during the time. No one standard was established, no leader or definite authority was recognised, and such conditions were not brought about until the days of the next generation. Milton himself must first be dealt with. His work necessarily stands alone, and so possesses a value that is unique. It created little interest at the time that it was written, yet its influence in English literature has been potent ever since.

XV. JOHN MILTON.

53. The Early Life of Milton.

Milton, when writing of private affairs, declared that he came *ex genere honesto*, of an honourable race. His family had formerly possessed Milton, near Thame, in Oxfordshire; and being compelled to forfeit it during the Wars of the Roses, had consequently ceased to be Milton of Milton for more than a hundred years. Milton's grandfather appears to have been an under-ranger, or a keeper of the forest of Shotover; he was a determined opponent of the doctrines of the Reformation. His son, who like himself was named John Milton, received his education at an Oxford school, probably as a chorister at one of the college chapels. There he imbibed the principles of the Reformation, and joined the Established Church, an action which led his father to instantly disinherit him.

John Milton the younger had therefore to leave Oxford, and seek his livelihood in London, where before long he followed the occupation of a scrivener—a person who draws up legal deeds and contracts. He seems to have had a prosperous business, and to have quickly made his mark in London. Personally, he was a man of considerable ability, a good classical scholar, and an excellent musician. In 1601 he published some madrigals, and some years later harmonised the tunes for the book of Psalms, of which those known as Norwich and York became

specially popular; and at one time it was said that, of the tenor part of the York tune, "half the nurses in England used to sing it as a lullaby."

Among John Milton's friends were necessarily many musicians, and several others of intellectual power and strong religious feeling. Milton's house, the Spread Eagle, in Bread Street, Cheapside, was the centre of a cultivated and agreeable circle. John Milton married Miss Sarah Caston, the daughter of a Welsh gentleman; and on December 9th, 1608, there was born to him a little son, who, being christened John, after his father and grandfather, carried on the family name to a third generation. He seems from the first to have been a singularly gifted child, and, like his father, was passionately fond of music. The friends frequenting the house were always kind to him, and one of them, Thomas Young, a Perthshire man, afterwards a minister in Suffolk, and a leading Puritan, became his first teacher. At ten years old John Milton the third wrote poetry, and from the age of twelve hardly ever retired from his books before midnight. In 1620 he was sent to St. Paul's School, where he worked hard, his father unduly encouraging his studies.

At St. Paul's, Milton made friends of a lad named Charles Diodati, who left the school two years before Milton did, and entered at Trinity College, Oxford. Their friendship continued without interruption for nearly twenty years, until the time of Diodati's early death.

In February, 1625, Milton was admitted as a pensioner at Christ's College, Cambridge. He was then two months over sixteen. All his life he remained a handsome man, even at this period being famous for his remarkable personal beauty. He was not tall, but singularly graceful, with light brown hair flowing over his shoulders. His eyes were dark grey; his complexion fair and delicate. "His harmonical and ingenuous soul," wrote one of his friends, "dwelt in a beautiful and well-proportioned body." At college he was always called "The Lady."

In the year 1626 his married sister's first-born child died in infancy, and Milton wrote an elegy upon the event. This, his first known composition, has a certain amount of formality. The language is singularly well-chosen; the thought remarkable for a lad of seventeen.

In 1629 he took his B.A. degree, and for Christmas Day produced his *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity.*

The faults of this are inequality of treatment, a too gorgeous use of ornament, and a weak and inappropriate ending; but the conception and arrangement of the whole are very remarkable.

An idea which seems to have attracted him from a very early age formed during his university career a definite point in his life. It had always been Milton's belief that he was destined to produce some wonderful poem, which should sing to the praise and the glory of God, and immortalise his own name. He was prepared to give up all worldly ambition, and all ordinary success, if only this great end might be attained. His *Sonnet* runs as follows:

"How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of Youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career;
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th,
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-master's eye."

Indu'th, endows.

The subject was frankly discussed between father and son; and though the father remonstrated, the son held to his point. Eventually a Latin poem, *Ad Patrem*, was written just before John Milton left Cambridge. In it he expressed the most grateful thanks to his father, for not having forced him to become either a merchant or a lawyer.

John Milton then took his M.A. degree in 1632, and, bidding the University farewell, went to live with his father at Horton. Here he spent the next five years in constant study, preparing himself as much as possible for the great summons that he expected.

The five years were not wasted. *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *The Arcades*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas* were all probably written at Horton before 1638. Milton continued the keen and delicate classical studies that he had begun at Cambridge; learnt all there was to know of his own country's literature; made himself well acquainted with the authors of the continent, especially of Italy; and absorbed everything connected with art, above all with music, that he could acquire in England.

L'Allegro contains some of "the earliest examples in our literature of the poetry of natural description." It reveals a love of nature deeper and truer than any that had appeared since the days of Chaucer, though Milton never attained to the

metaphysical heights reached by Wordsworth with regard to the meaning of the universe.

Milton, like his father, was an accomplished musician. He played on the organ and the violoncello; he had a fine voice, and sang well. One of his most intimate friends was Henry Lawes, a player on the lute, a composer and a teacher of music, who had suffered for his Royalist opinions. Lawes was obliged to leave London, and seek for refuge in the country. He was employed, among other things, in teaching music to the eight daughters of the Earl of Bridgewater, who lived at Ashridge Park, a few miles from Horton. It was customary for the Earl's family to celebrate the birthday of their grandmother, the Dowager Countess of Derby, by a yearly festival. On one of these occasions Lawes was bidden to provide a masque for their entertainment. He composed the music himself and asked Milton to supply the necessary verses. The result was the production of a little play, called *The Arcades*, in which Lawes' music was so sweet, and Milton's verses so pretty, that they obtained much applause. Milton's work consisted of the words for three songs, and some thirty couplets of rhymed verse. A few lines from the first song represent the graceful fancies of the whole:

"Look, nymphs and shepherds, look,
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook?
This, this is she
To whom our views and wishes bend,
Here our solemn search hath end.
Fame that her high worth to raise
Seem'd erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise;
Less than half we find expressed,
Envy bid conceal the rest.
Mark what radiant state she spreads,
In circle round her shining throne,
Shooting her beams like silver threads;
This, this is she alone,
Sitting like a Goddess bright,
In the centre of her light."

The Arcades was so much thought of that when, in 1634, Lord Bridgewater had been appointed President of the Council of Wales, and it was necessary to give an entertainment to the county at Ludlow Castle, it was decided to have another masque, on a larger scale.

The result was the celebrated *Comus*, one of the most famous of Milton's early poems. The masque was entirely original in execution, except that the name was suggested to

Milton by its having been mentioned in a recent play of Ben Jonson.

Comus was really a Greek personification of disorderly pleasure. In old sacred festivals, when the processions of priests and singers passed from village to village, it had been customary for the riotous villagers to follow the procession in a wild mob, careless of the religious ceremony. This mob came to be known as the *Comus*; and then another idea sprang up of the existence of an actual evil spirit, a sort of malicious semi-divinity, who presided over all scenes of furious mirth.

Milton took this unpromising theme, and worked it out ingeniously. It had happened that, a short time before, the two sons and a daughter of the Earl of Bridgewater, on their return from a visit to some relations, were benighted in Haywood Forest, and, for some hours, Lady Alice was lost. Milton devised a pretty little story, in which a character called the Lady was to be played by Lady Alice, and she would not only be separated from her brothers in the forest, but would also fall into the hands of Comus. He would be disguised as a shepherd, and Lady Alice would suppose him to be an honest man. Then she would be led into a stately palace, to sit at a great feast; and being placed in an enchanted chair, would not be able to get away. Her brothers, terrified at her loss, were to be distracted with grief, and only consoled by the appearance of a good Spirit, who had been watching over them. He was to supply them with the means of defeating Comus, and they were to be able to do so; but their sister was to be left a prisoner, because they had no charm by which she could be enabled to move. In the midst of their perplexity, the Spirit was to return again and teach them how to summon Sabrina, the Goddess of the river, who alone could help them. Milton devised this as a compliment to the townsfolk of Ludlow, the town being situate on the river Severn, which, in Roman days, had been called Sabrina.

In 1632 Milton took his M.A. degree, and, two years later, had to mourn the deaths, first of his mother, and then of a college acquaintance, Edward King. Of his regrets for his mother he has left no traces in his writings; they were probably too deep, if written, to be given to public view. In the case of his contemporary, who had held a fellowship at Christ's College, the custom of the seventeenth century was followed, and a volume of elegies was prepared. Milton was asked for a contribution, and wrote his *Lycidas*.

Milton, like Spenser, held to the belief that the pastoral form

Lycidas, a beautiful youth; admired in Rome during the age of Horace.

of poetry was the best for a poet who was not yet certain of his work. He therefore used a pastoral name for the friend he lamented, which was appropriate as typifying the purity of the dead man's life.

The chief points of interest attaching to the poem are the two instances in which Milton broke away from his restrictions, and wrote as his heart directed. He boldly confuted those who held that King, by his early death, lost all hope of fame. Milton loftily replied that hope is not bounded by life. "Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil." Fame is judged by the purity and intention of even a young life, and it is only the great gods who can give the judgment. Again, when the wholesomeness of King's life was spoken of, Milton, by the voice of St. Peter, rebuked many of the priests on earth for their neglect of duty.

Milton does not seem at any time to have been anxious to publish his early poems. *Comus* was printed because Lawes got weary of copying it for his friends. *Lycidas* appeared in a volume that probably did not circulate beyond Cambridge. *The Nativity Ode*, *The Arcades*, *L'Allegro*, and *Il Penseroso* were all in manuscript until 1645. The popular taste of the time was not on Milton's side. Suckling, Lovelace, and the Cavalier poets, with Carew, Herrick, and Crashaw, represented the national feeling of the day; while to the Puritan party, Milton, until some years after, was virtually unknown.

For the fifteen months that followed the issue of *Lycidas*, he travelled on the continent, and, writing to Charles Diodati shortly before he left England, he used these remarkable words: "Let me whisper in your ear, that I may not blush at your reply—I think (so help me, Heaven!) of immortality. You enquire also what I am about? I nurse my wings, and meditate a flight. But my Pegasus rises yet on very tender pinions. Let us be humbly wise."

He travelled to Rome, Florence, Naples, and Geneva, carrying introductions to many celebrated people, and was especially well received by the Italians, who, when they had read his English and Latin poems in manuscript, regarded him as a far better poet than his countrymen ever did. He had purposed to go on to Greece and Sicily, but letters from home began to tell him of the struggle between Charles the First and the Parliament; and to Milton it seemed wrong for any Englishman to be absent from such a scene of national disaster. On his return, the first thing he heard was of the death of his dear friend Diodati, and this loss he commemorated in a Latin elegy more natural and touching than *Lycidas*.

54. Milton's Manhood.

Thirty-one years of Milton's life had now gone by, and the summons to a great work had not arrived. Deciding upon some definite action, he settled himself in a London house, and began teaching, and his time was occupied with school duties, household troubles, and constant controversies. Poetry was laid almost entirely on one side, for in the course of the next twenty years only a few sonnets appeared.

Milton's prose, quite apart from the nature of his subjects, has never ranked very highly. It is the strangest mixture of beautiful writing and careless construction; of cutting irony and coarse and virulent abuse.

In 1642 appeared a book written by him on the question as to the place that the bishops should hold in the government of the Church. Its interest now depends upon Milton's statement with regard to himself. He writes that he will do something, though at present he knows not what that shall be, of use and honour to his country. "This," he says, "is not to be obtained but by devout prayer to the Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out His Seraphim with the hallowed fire of His altar to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, and insight into all seemly arts and affairs, till which in some measure be compassed I refuse not to sustain this expectation."

In 1643 Milton, being then thirty-five years old, married a young lady of the age of seventeen, a union at first attended by disastrous results, though one that afterwards became far more happy. Four children were born of the marriage, and their mother lived until 1652.

In the same year that he married, his best prose work appeared, the book known as the *Areopagitica*. The Long Parliament had set up a Committee of Examinations for the Control of Printers, and the Lords and Commons followed this step by an ordinance for the regulation of printing, and "for suppressing the printing of many scandalous, seditious, and libellous pamphlets, to the great defamation of religion and Government." Milton named his book after the speech delivered at Athens by Isocrates, the object of which was to persuade the High Court of the Areopagus to reform its procedure. Milton, by his book, endeavoured to prevent the High Court of Parliament from sanctioning the decree for stopping the liberty of the press. He took the old Greek oration for his model, and wrote with [illegible]ity and feeling. Yet even *Areopagitica* was not free from [illegible]tressing faults of Milton's prose.

The following extract will show the curiously long and involved sentence which he could never control:

"When a man writes to the world, he summons up all his reason and deliberation to assist him; he searches, meditates, is industrious, and likely consults and confers with his judicious friends; after all which done, he takes himself to be informed in what he writes, as well as any that wrote before him; if in this, the most consummate act of his fidelity and ripeness, no years, no industry, no former proof of his abilities, can bring him to that state of maturity as not to be still mistrusted and suspected, unless he carry all his considerate diligence, all his midnight watchings, and expense of Palladian oil, to the hasty view of an unleisured licenser, perhaps much his younger, perhaps far his inferior in judgment, perhaps one who never knew the labour of bookwriting, and, if he be not repulsed or slighted, must appear in print like a puny with his guardian and his censor's hand on the back of his title to be his bail and surety that he is no idiot or seducer; it cannot be but a dishonour and derogation to the author, to the book, to the privilege and dignity of learning. And what if the author shall be one so copious of fancy as to have many things well worth the adding come into his mind after licensing, while the book is yet under the press, which not seldom happens to the best and diligentest writers; and that perhaps a dozen times in one book? The printer dares not go beyond his licensed copy; so often then must the author trudge to his leave-giver, that those his new insertions may be viewed; and many a jaunt will be made, ere that licenser, for it must be the same man, can either be found, or found at leisure; meanwhile either the press must stand still, which is no small damage, or the author lose his accuratest thoughts, and send the book forth worse than he had made it, which to a diligent writer is the greatest melancholy and vexation that can befall. And how can a man teach with authority, which is the life of teaching, how can he be a doctor in his book, as he ought to be, or else had better be silent, whenas all he teaches, all he delivers, is but under the tuition, under the correction of his patriarchal licenser to blot or alter what precisely accords not with the hide-bound humour which he calls his judgment. For though a licenser should happen to be judicious more than ordinary, which will be a great jeopardy of the next succession, yet his very office and his commission enjoins him to let pass nothing but

After all which done, a Latin construction.

Palladian oil, oil devoted to Pallas (Minerva), the goddess of learning; hence oil consumed during his studies.

Puny, a minor, an infant. The word is now only used as an adjective.

Under the press, the modern phrase is "*In* the press."

Accuratest, most carefully thought out. The comparative and superlative of words ending in -ate and -ite are now made by prefixing *more* and *most*. See "exquisitest."

Had made it, would have made it.

Doctor, used in its literal sense of teacher.

Patriarchal licenser, a sarcastic allusion to Archbishop Laud, who was said to be endeavouring to get himself appointed Patriarch of the Western Church.

Hide-bound, literally skin-bound. A morbid tightness of skin marks certain diseases in animals. Here used contemptuously, with the meaning of *bigoted*.

what is vulgarly received already. Nay, which is more lamentable, if the work of any deceased author, though never so famous in his lifetime and even to this day, come to their hands for license to be printed or reprinted, if there be found in his book one sentence of a venturous edge, uttered in the height of zeal (and who knows whether it might not be the dictate of a divine spirit?), yet, not suiting with every low decrepit humour of their own, though it were Knox himself, the reformer of a kingdom, that spake it, they will not pardon him their dash; the sense of that great man shall to all posterity be lost, for the fearfulness or the presumptuous rashness of a perfunctory licenser. And to what an author this violence hath been lately done, and in what book of greatest consequence to be faithfully published, I could now instance, but shall forbear till a more convenient season. Yet if these things be not resented seriously and timely by them who have the remedy in their power, but that such iron-moulds as these shall have authority to gnaw out the choicest periods of exquisitest books, and to commit such a treacherous fraud against the orphan remainders of worthiest men after death, the more sorrow will belong to that hapless race of men, whose misfortune it is to have understanding. Henceforth let no man care to learn, or care to be more than worldly wise; for certainly in higher matters to be ignorant and slothful, to be a common steadfast dunce, will be the only pleasant life, and only in request."

In 1645 Milton edited a volume of his poems, collected for the first time; and two years later moved to a house in Holborn, looking out into Lincoln's Inn Fields. In 1647 he was able to give up his work of teaching, for his father died and left him a small income.

His political vigour brought him reward after the execution of Charles the First. He was appointed Latin Secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, where he wrote the despatches to foreign powers, and acted as interpreter to envoys from foreign lands. This official work of the secretaryship Milton could do well, but he found himself being perpetually called upon to defend the course of the whole Rebellion. He was also required to be an advocate for the policy carried on by the Council from day to day. This involved him in constant quarrels and disputes, until the amount of work injured his health, and extra toil in the writing of two books, intended to confute Salmasius, brought about the loss of his sight. By the

Vulgarly, commonly. **Though never so famous**, however famous.

Knox, John Knox was described elsewhere by Milton as the "reformer of Scotland to the Presbyterian discipline."

Pardon him their dash, refrain from marking their dash, the sign of erasure on his writings.

Fearfulness, used in the sense of timidity.

Timely, now, at once. An adjective in the present day—an adverb in Milton's time.

Salmasius. Claude de Saumaise, a Frenchman, and one of the foremost scholars of Europe, had been commissioned to write a *Defence of Charles I.* Milton wrote his *Defence of the English People* against this book, but spoilt his case by the coarse invective that he poured upon Salmasius.

spring of 1652 he was quite blind, when only in his forty-fourth year.

Just before the Restoration, Milton had retired on an official pension; and though he was saved from harm by the Act of Oblivion, a prosecution was begun against him for his defence of the execution of the late king. Charles the Second, however, was far from being a vindictive man; and the action fell to the ground, though the pension necessarily stopped.

It is pleasanter to turn from Milton's political career to the record of his private affairs. His first wife had died in the year when he lost his sight. Four years later he married a second time, and was far more happy than he had been before. This good fortune did not last long, for within a year the second wife died upon the birth of her first child, and the *Sonnet*, in which he speaks of having seen her in a dream, is the most touching poem in all his work.

"Methought I saw my late espousèd saint
Brought to me, like Alcestis, from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom wash'd from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the Old Law did save;
And such, as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:
Her face was veil'd, yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night."

Alcestis. This queen being told by an oracle that her husband, Admetus, could never recover from a disease unless a friend died for him, willingly laid down her life. Hercules, "Jove's great son," brought her back alive from Hades.

Milton now contemplated three great undertakings. One was the preparing of a Latin Dictionary, another the compiling of a History of England, another the writing of an Epic. From the first he was debarred by his blindness; the second was only finished for the Old English period; in the third, which developed into the immortal *Paradise Lost*, he found the task for which he had been waiting all his life.

When poverty fell upon him he retired to Jewin Street, near Aldersgate, and, though in wretched circumstances, married a third time. Milton was happy with this wife, but she seems to have treated the step-children unkindly, even to the extent of robbing them after her husband's death. It was said that the girls were compelled by her to read to him in languages which

they did not understand, and that his blindness prevented him for a long time from discovering the fact. He then at once released them from the task, and gave them money with which to learn the art of gold and silver embroidery. His purpose in doing this was that they might be able to earn their living after he was dead. The youngest, Deborah, always spoke of her father with great affection, and declared, many years later, that he was "delightful company, the life of the conversation, not only on account of his flow of subject, but of his unaffected cheerfulness and civility." In 1662 Milton removed again to a small house in Artillery Walk, near Bunhill Fields, where he lived the simplest and most regular of lives. He rose at four in the summer and five in the winter; listened to a chapter of the Hebrew Bible; and was left till seven in meditation. After breakfast he had people to read to him; and with this, and with dictating his own verses to an amanuensis, the day passed till noon. From twelve to one, he walked or exercised himself in a swing. At one he dined, and then till six delighted himself with music, or was read to. From six to eight friends came to see him; at eight he supped, and smoked a pipe, and went to bed at nine.

It was not until after the settlement in Bunhill Fields that Milton began his real work on *Paradise Lost*, the subject of which he says he had been "long choosing and begun late." *Samson Agonistes* seems to come from about the same time, but it was not published until 1671, when it appeared with *Paradise Regained.*

In 1665 the outbreak of the plague made Milton's friends urge him to leave London, and a small cottage was found for him at Chalfont, in Buckinghamshire. In this quiet and remote spot he completed the finishing touches to his great poem.

On his return to London in 1665 or 1666, he negotiated with a bookseller for its copyright. He sold it for five pounds in hand, five pounds more when thirteen hundred copies were sold, and the same sum on the publication of the second and third editions. He received altogether fifteen pounds, and after his death his widow was paid another eight.

In 1674 John Milton passed quietly and peacefully away.

55. Milton's Greater Poems. (1) "Paradise Lost."

When we are about to study an epic, the first thing necessary is to acquire some knowledge of the story or tale which the poem is going to tell. In the case of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* we can scarcely avoid taking the two together. They are companion poems as much as *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso.* The first deals with the Rebellion of the Angels, the Creation, the

Temptation of Man, and the Fall. The second speaks of Christ's temptation, and the defeat of Satan. It is not a sequel to the other, because while it deals definitely with one great circumstance, *Paradise Lost* begins and ends in infinity. In form, too, it is a dramatic poem rather than an epic. The strongest link that joins the two poems is its study of the character of Satan. A sharp line is drawn between the fallen angel, proud and desperate, who easily deceives man, and the crafty spirit who is vanquished by the Saviour; yet the poems show distinctly how the two studies are true descriptions of one and the same being.

Paradise Lost, as Milton tells his story, may be divided into three portions. In the first Heaven and Hell are opened to the imagination, and the rebellion of the angels and their strife with the Deity, are described (Books I., II., III., and the larger part of V. and VI.). The second part (Books I., IV., and part of V., VI., and VIII.) deals with the creation of mankind, which places humantiy between the contending powers of good and evil; the intercession of the Messiah; and the conditions of man's existence. It is in these that Raphael, the Archangel, gives to Adam a narrative of the past, which explains events that concerned man before Adam was created. The third part (Books IX. to XII.) narrates the wiles of Satan against man, and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. The same books include Michael's Vision of the Future; the Redemption of Man; and the work of Christ.

The spirit of Milton as displayed in *Paradise Lost* is the firm conviction of the supremacy of God in wisdom and beneficence, and the resolve that this truth of truths shall be impressed upon all his hearers.

The purport of Milton's poem is to explain the two great problems of religion: "Why was man permitted to fall?" and "Man having fallen, how has God dealt with him?" Milton's answer to the first is that God made man free, and man made a wrong use of his freedom. Had he been formed only capable of choosing one out of two alternatives, he would have had neither choice, liberty, nor use of reason. The answer to the second problem is expressed by the words of Adam:

> "O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
> That all this good of evil shall produce,
> And evil turn to good; more wonderful
> Than that which by creation first brought forth
> Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
> Whether I should repent me now of sin
> By me done and occasion'd, or rejoice
> Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring—
> To God more glory, more goodwill to men
> From God—and over wrath Grace shall abound."

A summary of the poem's contents should now be considered. The first book opens with a superb introduction, in which Milton declares the object of his work, claiming that it

> "With no middle flight intends to soar,
> Above th' Aonian Mount, while it pursues
> Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme."

Aonian Mount, in Bœotia, one of the dwellings of the Muses.

The scene is laid in Hell, only nine days after the expulsion of Satan and his angels from Heaven. They lie stupified on the burning lake. Satan, the first to recover, rouses Beelzebub, and then calls his followers to meet him on the dry land at the edge of the lake. To this "dreary plain" they make their way on wing, and Satan addresses them in a manner firm and self-possessed. He tells that there is even a hope of their regaining Heaven; a new world, with new creatures called human beings, has just been brought into existence:

> "Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
> Our first eruption, thither or elsewhere."

Full council, however, must be held. Pandemonium, a gorgeous palace, is immediately erected; and the Council meets, only the great angels being allowed to attend.

Book II. gives an account of their debate. The question of the new world is considered; and Satan declares that he will perform the duty himself, and starts alone on his dreary journey. He arrives at the Gates of Hell, which he finds guarded by two horrible monsters, Sin and her son Death.

They refuse at first to open the gates, but in the end allow Satan to pass. He then makes his way over the expanse of Chaos, and at last comes in sight of the Universe.

Book III. opens with a scene in Heaven. The Almighty knows what Satan is planning, and, pointing him out to the Son, reveals the design of the Arch-Fiend; but adds that Man will in the end be saved, if he can find a Redeemer. The Son of God immediately offers to become the ransom; the Father gladly accepts Him, and the Host sing His praise.

Satan, by this, has reached the Universe, and made his way to the Sun. He changes his appearance to that of a heavenly angel, and inquires of Uriel, the guardian spirit of the Sun, which is the way to the World. Uriel directs him, and he continues his descent until he alights on Mount Niphates.

In Books IV. and V. are the famous descriptions of Eden and of its innocent inhabitants, Adam and Eve. Satan, who has penetrated into Eden, hears them speaking of the Tree of Knowledge, and perceives an easy way of carrying out his plans. He attempts to influence Eve at night by a dream, but

is interrupted by Gabriel, the Archangel, who has been sent from Heaven to protect Adam and Eve. Satan is obliged to fly; yet Eve is troubled by her dream, and on waking, tells Adam of it, who is alarmed, and does his best to comfort Eve. The two go forth to their labours after singing their morning hymn. Raphael, the Archangel, sent by the Almighty, descends into Eden to explain to Adam his exact position, so that he may not hold himself blameless should he commit sin. Raphael reveals who Satan is, and how he came to be inimical to the world. He counsels Adam to be faithful to his obedience, and wary of his enemy. In the next two books the history of the War in Heaven and of the Creation of the World, as accomplished at the will of the Heavenly Father, by the Son, are told to Adam and Eve by Raphael, and afford them great delight. In Book VIII. Adam seeks for knowledge of the celestial motions, and Raphael answers him only doubtfully. He advises Adam not to search for things that are so far beyond his powers of knowledge. Adam admits the justice of Raphael's advice, and then relates to the Archangel what he remembers since his own creation. Raphael listens attentively, and departs from Paradise, renewing his admonitions and advice.

Book IX. contains the wonderful account of the Temptation and the Fall, and Book X. the record of the speedy punishments. The Son of God, descending to Eden, passes sentence on Adam and Eve and on the serpent; while Sin and Death force their way into the Garden, and declare that the Earth is theirs. Satan returns to Pandemonium, proud of the evil he has done; when suddenly he and all his followers are changed into reptiles. Adam and Eve find consolation in supplicating the Almighty; and in Book XI. the Son intercedes for them, and presents their prayers to the Father. Their penitence is graciously accepted, still the sentence of banishment is passed. Michael is sent to teach Adam what will happen in the future, and to convey to him the promise of the hope of redemption. Michael takes Adam to a great mountain and in a vision shows him the Earth's history up to the Flood. The XIIth Book continues Michael's teachings, wherein the history of Israel is told, from the Flood to the coming of Christ. The Archangel also speaks of the rise of Christianity, and makes Adam fully sure of the promise of Redemption. Then the wonderful poem ends; Adam and Eve are banished from Paradise, to seek their fate in the outer world.

"High in front advanced,
The brandish'd sword of God before them blazed
Fierce as a comet; which, with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Libyan air adust,

Began to parch that temperate clime ; whereat
In either hand the hast'ning angel caught
Our ling'ring parents, and to the eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain ; then disappear'd.
They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand ; the gate
With dreadful faces throng'd and fiery arms ;
Some natural tears they dropp'd, but wiped them soon ;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wand'ring steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way."

Subjected plain, the plain lying below.

(2) The Subject and Characters of "Paradise Lost."

The subject of *Paradise Lost* is perhaps the most heroic ever chosen by a poet. As the conception of it is lofty, so the execution is almost without flaw. Satan, the first of created things, seeks to put himself upon the level of the Highest, and is cast into Hell. He tempts, and suceeeds in leading away, a third part of the Heavenly Host, who follow him through all disaster with a constant obedience. The punishment of Satan is as great as his ambition, his courage and his strength of will are equal to his sufferings. Hell trembles before him ; Sin and Death are his slaves ; mankind is an almost helpless prey.

"All is not lost ; th' unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield
And what is else not to be overcome"

remain to him as bitter consolations.

Milton's verse, in strength, equals the greatness of his conception. Satan appears in the poem endowed with grandeur and strength ; and whether he walks, or sits, or flies,

"Aloft incumbent on the dusky air,"

he is depicted in the most striking and convincing terms. We can see his form before us, vast, strong, and uneasy, the ruins of a god.

The study of Satan is supported by the picture given of his followers. During their leader's absence there is no outbreak or revolt among them ; they rather,

"retreated in a silent valley, sing,
With notes angelical to many a harp,
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall,
By doom of battle."

Fault has been found with Milton, because it is declared that he virtually makes Satan his hero, and not Adam. He probably never had any intention of following the latter course. The really heroic figure of the poem is the Son, depicted from one aspect in *Paradise Lost*, and from quite a different one in *Paradise Regained*. The whole theme and idea of the earlier poem would be incomplete without the fulfilment of its promise in the second. The picture of Satan vanquished ignominiously, and shown as absolutely despicable, stands in strong contrast to the presentment of him after his expulsion from Heaven. His treachery to mankind prevents any hope of forgiveness; he has no longer even the characteristics which he retained at the time of his fall.

Of Adam and Eve it has been said that little interest can be felt in them, because they have none of the passions or pursuits of human life. Such a criticism merely betrays a misunderstanding of Milton's work. He did not in the least intend that his picture of Adam and his wife should be taken as a representation of ordinary life. The interest attaching to the unhappy pair is rather that the destinies of mankind were entrusted to them, while they were in a state of innocence. In them

> "The generations were prepared; the pangs,
> The internal pangs were ready, the dread strife,
> Of poor humanity's afflicted will,
> Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny."

Their first false step

> "Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden."

For Milton had no intention of drawing them as if they belonged to the actual world, where such a fault as theirs would be due to presumption and self-conceit. Milton thought of them as being pure and faultless, innocent of sin as the angels, and only one step removed from the denizens of Heaven. It was their lot to show that such would not be fitted to inhabit a world exposed to the actions of sin and death, as well as to the temptations of the King of Evil. To live in the world at all, they would have a constant struggle to stand against, a ceaseless conflict with all that was mercenary and impure. The few happy days in Eden show them making their first delicious experience of life, perfectly innocent of everything except themselves. They were as yet the only human beings in existence, wondering at their own lives, enraptured with one another, hearing the voice of their Maker as He walked in the Garden, attended upon themselves by ministering angels, and with winged messengers from Heaven descending in their sight. There was no need to

them for action ; they had but to feel their own happiness, and "know to know no more." There is no intention or design here of giving them any knowledge of human passion or human life. Their grief is of the kind that arises at the loss of unspeakable happiness, and at their resignation to inevitable fate. There is as yet in them none of the fierceness engendered by agony of mind at the ceaseless struggles of the will with circumstances, and irritated by repeated disappointment. They had accepted their unlooked for happiness as a gift from their Creator ; they submitted to its loss, not without sorrow, but without angry repining. Milton shows with what care he had conceived and thought over their position when he uses his famous phrase :

> "Some *natural* tears they dropt, but wip'd them soon ;
> The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and Providence their guide."

(3) The Sources and Style of "Paradise Lost."

The main idea of *Paradise Lost* is obviously taken from the Bible ; and many other writers have necessarily dealt with the same or with similar scenes. Attempts have been made to prove that Milton drew the materials of his poem from certain Italian writers, Tasso and Andreini in particular ; from the writings of Grotius and Taubmann, two Teutonic scholars ; from Jacob Cats, a Dutchman ; from Cædmon, from Phineas Fletcher, from Spenser, and from a score of others.

Undoubtedly there are certain influences which helped to form Milton's style, all of them moulded and shaped by him in his own way. The words of the text of Genesis, which tells of Adam's expulsion from Eden, are plain and simple to the last degree : "So he drove out the man ; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Milton, deriving the idea from these words, turns them into poetry of wonderful power.

Milton's knowledge of the great classic writers was almost equal to his knowledge of the Scriptures ; and his work, in this respect, as has been well said, is "full of the exquisite charm of endless reference to the noblest things that the ancients have thought and said." In the great literature of Italy he was intimately acquainted with the works of Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, and Ariosto ; and in English literature he was, to use the words of Dryden, "the poetical son of Spenser." Hazlitt has pointed out that Milton may have borrowed more than any other writer, yet is perfectly distinct from all of them. The power of Milton's own mind is stamped on every line, and his learning seems to have come to him by intuition. His imagina-

tion is the force of nature. He makes single words tell like pictures :

"Him followeth Rimmon, whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharphar, *lucid* streams."

The great feature of Milton's style may be best described as his sublimity. His own powers of imagination are grand and powerful, his style is dignified and sonorous, and in the working out of a sublime idea it seems to him only natural to employ sublime imagery and expression. This he has the power of bringing out in only a few syllables :

"Who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
These *thoughts that wander through eternity*?"

He has the skill of influencing his readers, not so much by what he expresses, as by what he suggests. The familiar passages of *Paradise Lost* are often little more than long lists of names. But they are charmed names ; to a cultivated mind, every one is a first link in a long association of ideas. One may take us back to a remote period of history, the time of

"the heroic race
That fought at Thebes and Ilium . . . " ;

another brings us a memory of

". . . what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son " ;

and yet another will make us think of the days

"When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia."

Hence Dr. Johnson's dictum—"Milton's poetry crowds the imagination."

(4) The Verse of Milton.

Care must be taken in reading the verse of Milton, not because he brought in anything new with regard to metre, but because he made use of what was already known in a more effective way. The regular ten-syllabled line of the older English poetry had consisted of five metrical feet. Each of these feet was called an iambus, and was made up of two syllables—an unaccented one followed by an accented. Verse which was always written in such a metre soon proved monotonous. An example of its use can be seen in the first English tragedy, Sackville's *Gorboduc*. At last the presence of another two-syllabic foot was allowed. This was called the

trochee, and, having an accented syllable followed by an unaccented one, was exactly the contrary of the spondee. The trochee was permitted in any foot of the ten-syllabled line, its usual place being the first, where it had the effect of giving a strong impulse to the whole. The use of the trochaic foot made a wonderful difference in the method of verse-writing, adding to it a variety which it had not known before. Still, it was hampered with the tendency to keep in couplets, owing to the risk of its getting out of shape if the sentences were allowed to continue for more than two lines. The dramatists, however, and especially Marlowe, rebelled against such a restriction. They broke down the restraints of the couplet, and let the sense run on in the verse so long as might be necessary. This was known as the overflow. The danger attendant upon it was carefully guarded against, and Milton made his poetry secure by adding something which Professor Saintsbury has ingeniously described as the "verse-paragraph." To avoid the chance of his thought running beyond control if he allowed it the overflow, Milton so carefully pondered over and arranged his subjects that he could deal with them in a series of different sections. These are what Professor Saintsbury calls the "paragraphs." Each of them keeps a certain thought or subject distinct and clear, and does not allow it entanglement with another. Milton's poetry being in blank verse is naturally free from the snares of rhyme; but the paragraph is far more difficult to manage, because it can only be guided by the subtle influence of the cadence of its lines. How well this has been done the opening of the first book of *Paradise Lost* most clearly shows.

The sixteen lines which compose it have no full stop in them from the first word to the last. An address is made to the Heavenly Muse who inspired Moses on Mount Sinai, and David on Mount Zion, by the waters of Siloa, to assist him in his great attempt and help him to surpass what the classical poets did, who only got their inspiration from the Muses of Antiquity. The paragraph is perfect and complete in itself, and interferes in no way with the construction or meaning of the next one.

The second paragraph is addressed to the Holy Spirit, the name given by Milton to the impulse or voice of God which inspired the prophets. There seems to be no doubt that Milton considered himself an inspired man, and that he wrote these lines with all humility, closing them with the declaration that what he craved for was to

> "assert eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to man."

Then, without further delay, Milton proceeds to the direct telling of his great story, keeping these divisions of his verse so

varied and yet so complete in themselves that all sense of weariness from the length of the poem is obviated.

The result of this is that Milton's blank verse, like Shakspere's, is one of the few in the language that deserves the name of verse. Those who have condemned *Paradise Lost* as harsh and unequal, modelled their ideas of versification upon the polished sing-song of Pope. There are, however, far more examples in Milton of musical expression, or of an adaptation of the sound of the verse to the meaning of the passage, than in any other poet except, again, Shakspere. Spenser is one of the most harmonious of the stanza writers, Dryden the most sounding and varied, and Pope the most correct of the rhymists. Yet in neither of them is there the same ear for music, the same power of bringing into harmony with one another the varieties of both musical and poetical rhythm. The sound of Milton's lines is made to harmonise with the expression, almost with the image, of the sentiment. Thus the most wonderful art is shown in the description of the punishment of Mulciber,

> "and how he fell
> From Heaven, this fabled, thrown by angry Jove
> Sheer o'er the crystal battlements; from morn
> To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
> A summer's day; and with the setting sun
> Dropt from the zenith like a falling star
> On Lemnos, the Ægean Isle."

Milton himself has given us the theory of his versification:

> "Such as the meeting soul may pierce
> In notes with many a winding bout
> In linkèd sweetness long drawn out."

(5) "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes."

Paradise Regained was published in 1671, the same year as *Samson Agonistes*; it seems to have been written almost immediately after the completion of *Paradise Lost*. It has never become so famous a poem as its forerunner; it is not its equal in strength or interest.

Book I. begins with Milton's Prologue; his appeal to the Heavenly Spirit from whom he has before obtained aid. He beseeches the Spirit to grant him strength and grace to tell of the wonderful things that the Son of God had done on earth from the time of His meeting with John the Baptist until the defeat of Satan. He then speaks of John's baptisms in Jordan; of Christ coming to him, "obscure, unmark'd, unknown"; of John's instant recognition of Christ; of Christ's miraculous baptism, given from Heaven, and of the dismay

of Satan, who saw the baptism when he was "roving still about the world."

Satan flies at once to his own place, and in mid-air holds council with all his mighty peers, telling them, in terror, of the arrival on earth of the woman-born, whom at the Fall the King of Heaven had declared that He would eventually send. Satan's peers are equally terrified, and gladly accept their leader's offer to return to the world, and to spy upon what is being done by the Son of God.

Christ had then left Bethabara where John baptized; and, wandering in the wilderness, passed forty days without food, meditating his course of action.

> "Full forty days he passed, whether on hill,
> Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night
> Under the covert of some ancient oak
> Or cedar, to defend him from the dew,
> Or harbour'd in one cave, is not reveal'd;
> Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt
> Till those days ended, hunger'd then at last
> Among wild beasts; they at his sight grew mild,
> Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd; his walk
> The fiery serpent fled and noxious worm,
> The lion and fierce tiger glared aloof."

Then comes the temptation and Christ's rebuke:

> "Man lives not by bread only, but each word
> Proceeding from the mouth of God."

The book ends with the discomfiture of Satan, who,

> "bowing low
> His gray dissimulation, disappear'd
> Into thin air diffused."

The second book opens with a touching account of Mary's grief at her Son not returning to her after the baptism; but He remained still in the desert,

> "Into himself descended, and at once
> All his great work to come before him set."

Satan took counsel with his potentates again, and heard their advice as to what should be done to tempt the Son of God from His purpose. Nothing that they suggested pleased Satan, and he declared his readiness to return to the earth, and lay all chances of honour, glory, and popular praise before the Son of God's eyes. The fiends assented gladly to this proposal, and Satan, quickly descending to the world, tempted the Christ with a rich and copious feast, which was again refused. If, then, He will not accept food and the necessaries of life, will he not take wealth, and raise Himself from the low estate of a car-

penter's son, poor and unknown, to a height whence he can control the world? The Son of God patiently refuses, and the book ends with the rejection of Satan's offer. The third opens with another attempt to please the Son of God by an offer of all worldly power, who replies that glory belongs not to Him, but to His Father in Heaven. Satan ventures to hint that the Almighty seeks too much glory, demanding it even from His foes, and is at once reproved by the Son of God; and

> "stood struck
> With guilt of his own sin, for he himself,
> Insatiable of glory, had lost all."

Recovering quickly, he endeavours to gain his end by promising to let the Son, the King of Israel, sit on David's throne. The only answer that he receives is to the effect that all these things lie in the hands of the King of Heaven; and he is further reminded that the success of Christ would be dangerous for himself.

> "'Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall?'
> To whom the tempter, inly rack'd, replied
> 'Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost
> Of my reception into grace; what worse?'"

The reply of the Son of God turns on the fact that Satan in David's day was Israel's worst enemy.

> "So spake Israel's true king, and to the fiend
> Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles."

The morning breaks fair and clear, and Satan, re-appearing, tries his last temptation. He declares that he, too, is a son of God, and that the Man from Nazareth is his fated enemy. He will take Him to Jerusalem and put Him to the only test, to prove once for all which of the two of them is divine. Flying to Jerusalem, over the wilderness and the plain, they arrive soon at the spot where

> "The Holy City lifted high her towers,
> And higher yet the glorious temple rear'd
> Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
> Of alabaster, topp'd with golden spires;
> There on the highest pinnacle he set
> The Son of God, and added thus in scorn,
> 'There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
> Will ask thee skill; . . . if not to stand,
> Cast thyself down safely, if Son of GOD;
> For it is written, He will give command
> Concerning thee to his angels, in their hands
> They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
> Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.'
> To whom thus Jesus; 'Also it is written,
> Tempt not the Lord thy GOD.' He said, and stood:
> But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell."

A few points have now to be considered in connection with Milton's last poem, *Samson Agonistes*. The Puritan party had so great a hatred of the stage that Milton defended his composition of "that sort of dramatic poem called tragedy, the gravest, moralest, and therefore most profitable of all poems," by quoting the opinion of Aristotle on the subject, and by quietly producing his work. Milton had no objection to stage plays, as his lines in *L'Allegro*, his noble verses on Shakspere, and his masques of the *Arcades* and *Comus* clearly show. He had for long planned a drama on the subject of *Paradise Lost*, but realised that the difficulties of the story would lend themselves better to a poem than to a play. He writes in his preface to *Samson Agonistes* that his motive is just the same as it was in *Paradise Lost*, "to justify the ways of God to man"; and this idea he works in carefully through the whole course of the drama.

Samson, of the tribe of Dan, and a prisoner in the hands of the Philistines, is led out to rest for a time during a festivity given in honour of Dagon, the Sea-God. His countrymen, who form the Chorus of the play, visit and endeavour to console him. Manoah, his father, is also present, trying to ransom him from the Philistines, in which he is not successful. The play, a singularly undramatic one, falls into two episodes: the first, a dialogue between Samson and his wife Dalila; and the second, a quarrel between Samson and a rival giant, Harapha of Gath, who has come to taunt him in his misery. An officer of the Philistines then arrives to bid Samson go into the Temple, and make sport again for the people. Samson at first angrily refuses, but, feeling a sudden inspiration, agrees to do his best. Manoah and the Chorus, wait outside until a loud crash is heard, with shrieks and cries for help, and an Israelite flies out of the Temple to tell Manoah and the Chorus what has happened. Manoah triumphantly welcomes his son's death as a victory over the Philistines, and the Chorus sing the praises of Samson. The poem has a great deal of interest attaching to it by reason of the vivid picture of himself which Milton has given in the study of *Samson*. Much of the poetry is fine, and the play is constructed on the lines of the ancient Greek dramas.

XVI. THE DAYS OF DRYDEN.

56. The Development of English Satire. Butler's "Hudibras."

The days of Dryden may be regarded as beginning with the Restoration; the year 1660 marked not only a definite change in political matters, but almost as great a change in literature. So long as the nation had continued in a vigorous condition, the

activity of authors went far to compensate for the faults of their verse and prose. When the national feeling died down, and the later part of Elizabeth's reign was not so prosperous as its earlier and middle years, the work in poetry steadily declined. A feeling grew up, through the trouble and anxiety of the Civil War and the Commonwealth, that a knowledge of all points in governance, both religious and political, was urgently needed. This extended even into the regions of art and, to some extent, of science. In literature it has been declared due to the influence of Milton, though that hardly made itself felt until after the production of *Paradise Lost*, which did not appear until the seventh year of Charles the Second's reign. Milton, if known at all to the outside world, was looked upon as a politician. Pepys leaves it on record that after the death of Cowley, a few days before *Paradise Lost* was published, he heard men saying that there would never again be such a poet. Milton's name was not even mentioned.

One of the first effects of this feeling was to strengthen satiric verse, as was seen in Marvell's *Satires*, and in the work of Oldham, a friend of Dryden, who died quite young. It was marked to a still greater degree in the *Hudibras* of Samuel Butler, the son of a man in poor circumstances, but of good family.

Butler had to make his own way in the world, and was appointed clerk to a lawyer, in whose office he industriously studied English law. After some little time he entered the service of the Countess of Kent, though in what capacity is not known, but it was probably for work of a secretarial description. In her house he had access to many books, and enjoyed the advantage of a friendship with the great John Selden. His next work was with Sir Samuel Luke, who lived near Bedford. Sir Samuel, a trusted friend of Cromwell, was a Presbyterian officer, holding a commission in the Parliamentary army. Butler seems to have observed very carefully all the customs and habits of a Presbyterian household. He was present at the meetings for prayer, council, and war, which were so frequent at Sir Samuel Luke's, and took the opportunity of collecting material, which he worked into his poem.

After the Restoration Butler became secretary to the Earl of Carbery, and was also appointed steward of Ludlow Castle. In 1663 he published the first and second parts of *Hudibras*, which met with a brilliant success, but in spite of their popularity they brought Butler little or no money. Fifteen years afterwards, in 1678, the third part appeared, and in 1680 Butler died, a poverty-stricken and disappointed man.

The fact that *Hudibras* has survived to our own times proves that it certainly was not a libel, although it may have been a

caricature. Sir Hudibras is described as a would-be learned knight who,

> "When civil fury first grew high,
> And men fell out, they knew not why;
> When hard words, jealousies, and fears
> Set folks together by their ears, . . .
> Then did Sir Knight abandon dwelling,
> And out he rode a Colonelling."

While Presbyterianism is represented by Sir Hudibras, Independency and sectarianism are typified by his attendant Ralpho. The two go out in search of adventures very much after the manner of Don Quixote, except that the aim of the Spanish knight is to save damsels in distress, while that of Hudibras is to put them into jail. Soon after starting, they come into contact with a crowd which is about to indulge itself in a bear-baiting. This sport they interfere with, not out of pity for the bear, but in order to annoy the multitude. Their interruption naturally leads to a fight, and presently the knight and squire find themselves both prisoners in the stocks, where they have to remain until Hudibras' fiancée, a well-to-do widow, comes to their assistance. On her arrival, she refuses to pay for Hudibras' freedom unless he promises to give himself a good sound thrashing. This he readily agrees to, so the widow pays his fine, and Hudibras is set at liberty. Next day he frankly regrets the rashness of his promise, and consults with Ralpho as to whether he is bound by it. Ralpho argues ingeniously on the question, while Hudibras will not admit the validity of his arguments, and proposes what seems to him to be a reasonable compromise. He will not take the whipping himself, but a proxy can, and Ralpho is just the man for the office. Ralpho, not unnaturally, dissents from this proposition, and a downright quarrel between the two is beginning, when they are interrupted by a sudden noise upon the road, and a tumultuous mob of revellers makes its appearance.

Hudibras is shocked at the sight presented by these merry-makers, and especially at that of one who is playing the part of an Amazon queen. He therefore interferes with them, and tries to stop their proceedings, only to find that Ralpho and he cannot put down some dozens of people. In the end Hudibras and Ralpho, pelted with stones and smeared with dirt, gallop away over the fields, and console themselves with philosophic moralising.

Hudibras, when free from the stocks, thinks of paying an instant call upon the widow. His collision with the mob who misused him so badly has rather damaged his self-confidence, and he now resolves that before going to her house he will

visit a certain astrologer and Rosicrucian, known as Sidrophel, to ask what his destinies may be. The knight and the wise man unfortunately get on to a discussion upon astrology, which ends not only in a dispute, but in an actual scuffle. Hudibras in this is victorious, and believes that he has killed Sidrophel. Alarmed at the prospect he hurries away, leaving all the blame to be attached to Ralpho. Ralpho meanwhile has taken the wind out of the knight's sails by going himself to see the widow at the time that Hudibras was busy fighting the Rosicrucian. Ralpho's account of Hudibras makes the widow form an opinion of him very different from that which she has previously entertained. When, therefore, Hudibras does see her, his reception is of a kind he has been quite unused to. At this point the story of the poem ends; the second canto of the third part is really an account of the collapse of the Rump. The third canto describes how Hudibras makes up his mind to write to the widow, and his letter and her reply are tacked on at the end. These epistles do nothing to help on the story, and Butler wrote no more.

57. John Dryden: his Life and Poems.

Dryden, though not in the highest rank of English literature, nevertheless exercised a great influence upon the development of its history. If Milton is regarded as the last of the older school of poetry, so Dryden must be looked upon as the first of the newer school. The final notes of Elizabethan poetry lingered in his verses, though it was never given to him to be a poet in the manner of the great men who had been his predecessors. Dryden was essentially a writer of the strongest common sense, and was thus enabled, though seldom writing true poetry, to produce a vigorous and an artistic verse. Although a clever boy, his career as a poet did not begin until, in his seven-and-twentieth year, he wrote his verses on the death of Cromwell.

Dryden was born in 1631, and was educated at Westminster and Trinity College, Cambridge. His father had a small property which passed to the poet, but Dryden himself, though never forgetting his native county, spent his life in London and Cambridge. Two years after writing the Cromwell lines Dryden, in the *Astræa Redux*, welcomed Charles the Second upon his return. This was not, as his enemies said, a coldly calculated change. His Cromwell verses were more on the lines of admiring the strength and persistence of the dead man than of showing any love for his policy or his schemes. The *Astræa Redux* was rather a dignified and graceful welcome of the king than a definite declaration of Dryden's own political feeling.

The *Annus Mirabilis*, which did not appear till 1667, is the

first poem which exhibits Dryden's real power. At this time Dryden was thirty-six years old, and his work as a poet had been hindered and obscured by the writing of dramas. These, begun in 1663, had to be continued for a livelihood; his last Prologue and Epilogue were written in 1700, only twenty days before his death. Dryden the dramatist has almost to be regarded as a different person from Dryden the poet. The work done in the latter direction will remain for ever in English literature. The dramatic work, valuable at its time, has long since been forgotten.

The year 1666 was a remarkable and a distressing one in the history of London. The Great Plague, which began in the year before, and had hardly ceased by the following September, was immediately followed by the Great Fire. The Dutch War, in which the English were checked by the action of the plague, had been rendered easy for the Dutch, who held the sea without any trouble. Dryden, during the plague, kept away from London, and lived at his father-in-law's country house at Charlton, in Wiltshire. Here he occupied himself with writing the *Annus Mirabilis*, a poem dealing with the disastrous events of the year. As a whole, this piece of work is disappointing, on account of the curious unevenness of its execution. It is turgid, and filled with unnecessary conceits; it shows the strangest mixture of excellent writing, marred by sudden descents into bathos; and the general impression produced by it is that it is confused, and occasionally affected. It is interesting, inasmuch as it was based upon a poem written in 1650 by Sir William Davenant; and arranged in quatrains, a very difficult metre to manage. Davenant, on the whole, did his work in this respect extremely well; and Dryden was strongly influenced by its example. The result was that the *Annus Mirabilis* is famous for its versification. Dryden not only proved that he was master of the rhythm, but showed how his effects were produced by a command over language. The description of the Great Fire is full of good poetry.

> "The vanquished fires withdraw from every place,
> Or, full with feeding, sink into a sleep;
> Each household genius shows again his face,
> And from the hearths the little Lares creep."

Lares, the guardian deities of a dwelling-place.

The graceful fancy of the last line is most effective. The apostrophe to the Royal Society, of which Dryden was an early member, is also admirable, and the concluding stanzas of the poem, foretelling the future of London when she should have recovered from the effects of the fire, are marked with a singular dignity and appropriate expression.

For fourteen years after the *Annus Mirabilis* was written, Dryden devoted himself to dramatic writing, and gained a training which settled and thoroughly completed his style. The result was shown not so much in his dramas as in their songs, where his lyric capacities obtained full play. The result came out more clearly in the vigour and force, the impetuosity and the strength which characterised the great satire of *Absalom and Achitophel.*

This poem appeared in 1681, and has never been surpassed by any other of its kind. The country at the time was perplexed with the question of the Exclusion Bill. Charles the Second had no legitimate heir to the throne; his brother, the Duke of York, was neither strong nor popular. The Prince of Orange, afterwards William the Third, at that time had no chance of the succession; he gained the crown subsequently by appearing as the deliverer of England from the Roman Catholic James. The candidate most likely of success was the Duke of Monmouth, the illegitimate son of King Charles.

The Exclusion Bill had been introduced in 1679, with the object of disabling the Duke of York, as a Papist, from succeeding to the crown, if he happened to outlive the king, his brother. The bill eventually passed, upon which Charles dissolved the Parliament. It was summoned again in October, 1680, and the bill was once more accepted by the Commons, but rejected by the Lords. In January, 1681, the Commons voted that no supplies should be granted until the Exclusion Bill was passed, so another dissolution took place on the 18th of the month. The Houses met again at Oxford in March. Charles dissolved them almost immediately, and summoned no more Parliaments during the rest of his reign. The Earl of Shaftesbury, who held the office of President of the Council until his dismissal, had worked with all his energy for the Exclusion Bill. Charles, in July, 1681, sent Shaftesbury to the Tower, and ordered that he should be tried for treason before a Grand Jury. Shaftesbury had been making a cat's-paw of Monmouth, and in the *Absalom and Achitophel*, Dryden used the old Hebrew story to illustrate the ill-feeling created between the king and Monmouth, by comparing it with the disputes of David and Absalom, and showed how Shaftesbury had influenced Monmouth by persuading him to make a progress through England in 1680. Monmouth had done this, calling himself the Protestant, until he had been arrested by the order of the king. Dryden's poem appeared while Shaftesbury was in the Tower; its aim was to turn the current of popular opinion, and to secure that a true bill for high treason should be passed at his trial. Dryden managed his subject very skilfully. To follow the

exact story of David and Absalom was impossible; it was used only as a kind of background, and the merit of the satire lay in delineation of various characters. Charles was David, Cromwell was Saul, the Duke of Buckingham Zimri, Titus Oates Corah, the Roman Catholics the Jebusites, and the Dissenters the Levites. Dryden proceeded to describe the heat given to faction by the outcry over the alleged Popish plot, and of the advantage that this had been to Shaftesbury. He it was who persuaded Monmouth to rebel, and Monmouth, in his folly, consented. Then Dryden argued that as Shaftesbury had been the leader of this movement, it was necessary to know who were his confederates. The wonderful character-study of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, consequently followed, with almost equally good descriptions of the king's friends. These were all very distinct, and the points of each man's nature were skilfully drawn. Dryden felt that he was dealing with a question of vital importance, one that had already nearly plunged the country into a civil war. If his writing was good and successful, it might bring to the scaffold the most dangerous opponent of the king. Popular feeling, however, ran too strongly. The poem was published on the 17th of November; and a week afterwards the Grand Jury at the Old Bailey ignored Shaftesbury's indictment. The second edition of the poem, published in the following month, contained some further lines—the first praising the conduct of Shaftesbury during the time that he had been Chancellor, the second making an appeal to Monmouth to rebel no more:

> "But, oh! that he would yet repent and live!
> How easy 'tis for parents to forgive!
> How with few tears, a pardon might be won
> From Nature, pleading for a darling son!"

The decision of the Grand Jury led to great public rejoicings, and a medal was struck in commemoration of the result. This gave Dryden the suggestion for the title of his next set of verses, *The Medal, a Satire against Sedition.* It was another invective against Shaftesbury, biting in its expressions, and wanting in the finish of *Absalom and Achitophel.* The pictures, not only of characters but of types, which had so adorned the *Absalom* were entirely wanting in *The Medal.* "It is now," wrote Dr. Johnson in 1780, "not much read, nor perhaps generally understood. . . . Yet the poetry has claims to popularity widely independent of the temporary nature of the subject." The lines on the instability of public opinion well illustrate Dryden's powerful and direct convictions.

An answer to *The Medal* appeared under the name of *The Medal of John Bayes, a Satyr against Folly and Knavery.* This

was written by Thomas Shadwell, a poetaster, and something of a dramatist. It was a direct attack by Shadwell on Dryden, full of personal references and passages of inexpressible coarseness.

Dryden replied with subtle and searching satire. In 1682 he published *Mac Flecknoe*. This set forth how an aged prince, Richard Flecknoe, who was recognised as the king of "realms of nonsense absolute," chose, at the end of his career, Shadwell for his successor. Shadwell was accordingly crowned in the theatre at Barbican, becoming the son of Flecknoe, or Mac Flecknoe. He was crowned with poppies, in recognition of his capacity for sending an audience to sleep, while

> "On his left twelve reverend owls did fly."

Then Flecknoe, blessing and counselling his successor, was let down the trap-door declaiming.

> "Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,
> Borne upwards by a subterranean wind,
> The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
> With double portion of his father's art."

In the following month appeared the Second Part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, of which only 200 lines were Dryden's own. The rest were written by Tate, who followed Dryden's method of verse with great success, though Dryden's hand is visible here and there in his lines. The poem is one long satire directed against Dryden's adversaries, notably Shadwell and Settle, a minor dramatist who had had some controversy with Dryden a few years previously. This Second Part of *Absalom and Achitophel* was concerned entirely with literary disputes, and had little or no bearing on the political views of the first.

Dryden's versatility was then clearly shown by the appearance, with this Second Part, of his most important poem. This was the *Religio Laici*, the Religion of a Layman. It supported the idea of Reason being only the dim light of moon and stars; and that with the coming of the sun, which signified the Revelation, their light was absorbed and lost. He defended the position of the Church as the established teacher of the people, and deprecated the opposition of private thought to its settled ordinances. He concluded his poem with these emphatic lines:

> "And after hearing what the Church can say,
> If still our reason runs another way,
> That private reason 'tis more just to curb
> Than by disputes the public peace disturb.
> For points obscure are of small use to learn,
> But common quiet is mankind's concern."

Dryden desired "for peace by resting on authority." This takes away what seems to be a direct antagonism between the

Religio Laici and his next great poem, issued five years later. *The Hind and the Panther* was a defence of the Roman Catholic religion, Dryden having definitely joined that Church about the end of the year 1685. The poem came at a time when it could support James the Second in his wish to bring about a Catholic reaction. *The Hind and the Panther* discussed this question as clearly as *Absalom and Achitophel* had dealt with political subjects in 1681. The wish that Dryden had expressed at the conclusion of the *Religio Laici* was steadily borne in mind through all the three books of *The Hind and the Panther*. The drawback to the poem was the form in which it was cast. Written as an allegory, with animals personified—the Milk-White Hind being the Church of Rome and the Panther the Church of England—the poem could hardly keep the grave tone that would have been most suitable and should have belonged to it. In spite of this flaw its work was richer than any of Dryden's other poems in beauty of detail. Macaulay's dictum on this point seems more than usually correct: "In none can be found passages more pathetic and magnificent, or greater ductility and energy of language."

In 1687 Dryden exercised his lyrical powers, and produced a fine *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, marred by a flaw in the last line of the third verse; and ten years later another ode on the same subject, the power of music, with the title of *Alexander's Feast*.

"Thus long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and art unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown:
He raised a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down."

In March, 1700, appeared Dryden's *Fables*, a book which has been described as, of all his works, giving "the most delight and the least offence." These were versions in modernised English of some of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales—The Knight's Tale, The Wife of Bath's Tale, The Character of a Good Parson*, adapted to Bishop Ken, and *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, with the Fox made a Puritan. From another mediæval poem, *The Flower and the Leaf*, he made a singularly happy poem. He does not give much

idea of Chaucer's original work. The translation is very free, with many words and phrases added, and many of Chaucer's own words left out. The mark of distinction in Chaucer is the effect that he produces by his simplicity. If the slighest change be made in the words themselves, or in any of his lines, their beauty and melody are destroyed. Two tales from Boccaccio do not suffer in a similar way. *Cymon and Iphigenia* and *Theodore and Honoria* are the best work in a charming volume. The *Fables* did two great things for English verse-literature. They remained as a model for narrative verse, except in the cases of metrical romance, or of ballad poetry. They also showed the best work that had been done in the heroic couplet. Pope was supposed to have superseded Dryden; though the formal see-saw of Pope's couplet often became wearisome, while Dryden's verse was always vigorous and fresh.

58. Dryden as a Dramatist.

The greater part of Dryden's life was occupied in writing for the stage, a work for which he had little liking, and no real capacity. His first attempt, a comedy entitled *The Wild Gallant*, and produced at the King's Theatre in 1663, was not a success. The critical Mr. Pepys, in his famous *Diary*, declares "it was ill-acted. The King did not seem pleased at all, the whole play, nor anybody else." Dryden, with considerable judgment, attributed his failure to "beginning with comedy, which is the most difficult part of dramatic poetry." His drama of the following year, *The Rival Ladies*, was therefore cast in the form of a tragi-comedy, and Mr. Pepys was pleased to write that it was "a very innocent and most pretty witty play." *The Indian Queen*, written by Sir Robert Howard, with the assistance of Dryden, was produced in 1664. Encouraged by its success, Dryden advanced still further with *The Indian Emperor* in 1665. In the summer of the year the plague broke out, and Dryden, leaving London, went into the country for eighteen months and wrote his *Annus Mirabilis*, *An Essay on Dramatic Poesy*, and the comedy of *Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen*. The *Essay* discussed a disputed point with regard to the employment of rhyme in tragedies. Dryden had advocated its use, but his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Howard, when publishing a volume of plays, in his preface, had severely criticised Dryden's doctrines. Dryden wrote the *Essay* in defence of his own views.

When the playhouses re-opened, Dryden's comedy of *Secret Love* was presented at the King's Theatre. Pepys' comment upon it was, "After dinner with my wife to the King's house to see the *Mayden Queene*, a new play of Dryden's, mightily recommended for the regularity of it, and the strain

and wit; and the truth is, there is a comical part done by Nell, which is Florimell, that I can never hope to see the like done again by man or woman. . . . But so great a performance of a comical part was never, I believe, in the world before as Nell do this, both as a mad girl, then most and best of all, when she comes in like a young gallant, and hath the motions and carriage of a spark the most that ever I saw any man have. It makes me, I confess, admire her."

The success of this comedy was followed up by another of a similar kind, *Sir Martin Mar-all*, and then taking Sir William Davenant as a colleague, Dryden produced a curious adaptation of Shakspere's *Tempest*. The play itself is of no value; it is a degradation of the original; but Dryden, writing for money, knew that the audiences of the day despised Shakspere, yet would come to anything of his own; and we find in the prologue to this version of the *Tempest* the noble lines in which he sung his praise and love for Shakspere. By the time the play was printed, a year after its production, Davenant was dead, and Dryden took the opportunity of admitting, in his Preface, that he was indebted to Davenant for the development of his love for Shakspere. These are some extracts from the Prologue:

> "As, when a tree's cut down, the secret root
> Lives under ground, and then new branches shoot,
> So from old Shakspere's honoured dust this day
> Springs up and buds a new reviving play;
> Shakspere, who, taught by none, did first impart
> To Fletcher wit, to labouring Jonson art,
> He, monarch-like, gave those his subjects law
> And is that Nature which they paint and draw. . . .
> If they have since outwrit all other men,
> 'Tis with the drops which fell from Shakspere's pen.
> The storm which vanished on the neighbouring shore,
> Was taught by Shakespere's *Tempest* first to roar.
> That innocence and beauty which did smile
> In Fletcher grew on this enchanted isle.
> But Shakspere's magic could not copied be;
> Within that circle, none durst work but he. . .
> And Shakspere's power is sacred as a king's."

At this time Dryden entered into a contract with the King's Company of players to produce three plays a year; and *An Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer*, and *Ladies à la Mode* were brought out in 1668. These plays were not only worthless, but deeply tainted with the spirit of the day. Evelyn, in his *Diary*, records that he went to the first, and "was afflicted to

Nell, Nell Gwyn, the most celebrated actress of Charles the Second's time.

Spark, a young man of fashion.

see how the stage was degenerated and polluted by the licentious times." Pepys writes in the same tone: "To the King's playhouse and saw an act or two of the new play, *Evening Love* again, but like it not. . . . Dryden do himself call it but a fifth-rate play." *Ladies à la Mode* was met with derisive laughter on its first night, and was never played again.

The years 1669 and 1670 saw a great change for the better. *Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr*, and the *Conquest of Granada* were tragedies in heroic verse, full of beauties and full of faults. Dryden himself, years later, declared himself ashamed of the extravagances that he had put into the mouths of his heroes, and wished that they could be burnt. The *Conquest of Granada*, in two parts, had an *Essay on Heroic Plays* prefixed to the first, once again, a defence of the use of heroic verse in tragedy; while the second had another essay condemning Ben Jonson and the writers of the preceding age, and declaring that those of the day were infinitely superior.

In 1671 a farce was brought out at the King's Theatre, which the Duke of Buckingham had been preparing for ten years. Its object was to ridicule tragedies written in rhyme. It had been intended to make Davenant the principal object of the burlesque, but as he died before the farce was ready, Dryden was put in his place, and was called the "poet Bayes," a nickname which attached itself to Dryden for the remainder of his life. Dryden dared not resent this impertinence. Buckingham was then in great favour with the king, and one of the most prominent members of the *Cabal*. Ten years after, when he had lost both power and influence, Dryden was able to make his reply. In *Absalom and Achitophel* he sketched Buckingham as Zimri, a piece of satirical work that stands side by side with his study of Shaftesbury.

"Some of their chiefs were princes of the land:
In the first rank of these did Zimri stand:
A man so various, that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome.
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
Was everything by starts, and nothing long:
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
Then all for flirting, painting, riming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ
With something new to wish or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes;
And both, to shew his judgment, in extremes:
So over violent, or over civil,
That every man, with him, was god or devil.

Chymist, a reference to the newly-formed Royal Society.

In squandering wealth was his peculiar art:
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
Beggared by fools, whom still he found too late,
He had his jest, and they had his estate.
He laughed himself from court; then sought relief
By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief:
For spite of him, the weight of business fell
On Absalom, and wise Achitophel:
Thus, wicked but in will, of means bereft,
He left not faction, but of that was left."

Still he found. *Still*, used in the sense of always or ever; *found*, found out.

In 1672 two new comedies appeared, of which *Marriage à la Mode* was successful, and *The Assignation* a failure. The action of the first was intricate, but singularly neat and full of life, though the play is very unequal, and the blank verse rough and unformed. It is curious to notice how, at this time, it was only when Dryden wrote in rhymed verse that his hand moved freely.

Amboyna, a play complaining of the cruelties of the Dutch to the English merchants, was written with the idea of arousing a national feeling against Holland. It is not a good play; and Dryden himself excuses it by saying, "It was written in haste, but with an English heart." In 1674 he made a curious attempt to turn *Paradise Lost* into a play with rhymed verses; and two years later produced a tragedy in rhyme, taking as its hero an Indian potentate, *Aurung-Zebe*, who was then actually alive. The most interesting thing is its prologue, in which Dryden confesses that he has grown weary of rhyme in tragedy, and is altogether dissatisfied with play-writing. He desired to devote himself to the writing of an epic, but from such work he could obtain no remuneration. His next play did not appear for a space of two years. It was then written in blank verse, but was merely an adaptation of Shakspere's *Antony and Cleopatra*. It created a great sensation, and Dryden regarded it as the best of his productions. It was followed by *Œdipus*, written in conjunction with Nathaniel Lee, and given to the company of the Duke of York's Theatre, a rival to the King's. This led to a breach between Dryden and the King's Company; and his next play, *The Kind Keeper, or Limberham*, was also performed by the Duke's actors. It gave offence, and was withdrawn in three days. In 1679 Dryden produced an unsatisfactory version of *Troilus and Cressida*. In 1681 *The Spanish Friar*, an attack on the Roman Catholic priesthood, proved one of the most successful of his comedies, appealing to those who were the supporters of the Exclusion Bill. After the writing of this play, Dryden laid aside dramatic work for several years, and began the finest part of his literary life with the *Absalom and Achitophel* of

November, 1681. There was one small exception in 1692, when he collaborated with Nathaniel Lee in a play called *The Duke of Guise*, and his own work for the theatre was not continued until eight years later.

Even this second period lasted but a little time. The year 1690 saw the production of two dramas, a blank-verse tragedy, *Don Sebastian*, and a comedy, *Amphitryon*. *Don Sebastian* was among the best of his writings, though not successful as a play. Dryden thought the failure might be accounted for by its length. In his own words, he had gone beyond "the proper compass of a play." *Amphitryon* met with a better fate.

He was equally successful with *King Arthur*, a work written about 1685, and laid by for some years. His next play was *Cleomenes*, King of Sparta, who sought for protection at a foreign court during a period of exile. The queen deemed this play to be somewhat suggestive of her father's unfortunate position at the French court, and wished that it should not be acted. Her feelings were smoothed down, and *Cleomenes* was brought out in 1692. The play was full of many noble passages, yet the general effect was one of heaviness, and when Dryden, two years later, brought out *Love Triumphant*, it also proved a complete, failure. This so disheartened Dryden that for a second time he gave up play-writing, and produced no more dramatic work.

Dryden's plays, regarded as plays, add very little to his reputation. Yet they are remarkable for their many passages of lofty and pure thought, for their choice of appropriate words, and for their power of making an unusual impression upon the memory. With all his faults, Dryden remains as the one representative dramatist of his time. His shrewd observation has left us a picture of a complicated and a strongly marked society. Without his plays and satires, we should have only an imperfect knowledge of the social conditions of his day. Jeremy Collier, in his attack upon *The Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, made in 1698, levelled his shafts chiefly against Dryden, an attack which the aged poet responded to in the famous lines claiming for the drama a power of moral instruction analogous to that of the pulpit. Speaking of the dramatists, he admits the truth of much that Collier says, and adds:

> "But let us first reform, and then so live
> That we may teach our teachers to forgive;
> Our desk be placed below their lofty chairs,
> Ours be the practice, as the precept theirs.
> The moral part at least we may divide,
> Humility reward, and punish pride;
> Ambition, interest, avarice accuse:
> These are the province of the Tragic Muse."

We cannot look in his work for the features of the highest poetry. He calls upon our reason rather than our imagination, and appeals to our intellect more than to our emotion. Towards the close of his life, he wrote of himself as "a man who had done his best to improve the language, and especially the poetry of his native land." This claim is justified in a very great degree. He cut away unnecessary ornament in style, and by fluency, constant power, and clearness of statement, improved didactic poetry. This, before his correction, had been without form, and was often incomprehensible. Guided by Dryden, writers of verse learnt to hold themselves in restraint, and avoided prolixity and dulness. He absorbed the suggestions of the men who had immediately preceded him, and put into definite shape the methods of treatment that they had devised, but not completed. By Dryden, as Dr. Johnson said, the English people were taught "to think naturally, and to express forcibly."

59. Dryden's Prose Work.

Dryden's prose, though less copious than either his poetry or his drama, was of greater value in the development of English writing.

His first treatise is the Dedication to the play of *The Rival Ladies*, in which he deals with a favourite subject, the use of rhyme in dramatic writing. His essay is chiefly interesting by reason of the evidence it gives of the wretched state into which blank verse had fallen at the time that Milton was writing *Paradise Lost*. It had never been employed for any poem of importance, with the two exceptions of Gascoigne's *Steele Glas*, published in 1576, and the *Tale of the Two Swans*, written by William Vallans, and issued in 1590, a work now absolutely forgotten. When Dryden wrote his essay in 1664, blank verse was in such bad repute that the idea of using it for a great poem was never entertained except by Milton, and three years were still to elapse before the appearance of *Paradise Lost*.

The one debatable point was whether the similarity of blank verse to prose did not make it fit for use in the dialogue of a play. Dryden's argument then was that a tragedy, for the sake of dignity, ought to be written in rhyme. He stated that Shakspere, "to shun the pains of continual rhyming, invented that kind of rhyming which we call blank verse." Dryden was unaware of the fact that the Earl of Surrey was the first writer of blank verse, when he followed a fashion just new in the literature of Italy. His verses were not printed until 1557, but in written copies they had been circulated long before.

Dryden admitted that rhyme led to inversions. Still, a skil-

ful writer could avoid them ; and then rhymed verse had all the advantages of prose besides its own. He spoke in great praise of Waller, Denham, and Davenant, and concluded, by claiming for rhymed verse that it helped the memory, that the sweetness of rhyme added grace to the satire of a repartee, and finally that it checked the overflow of fancy, which otherwise tended to outrun judgment. The *Annus Mirabilis* of 1667 was preceded by an *Essay on the Historical Poem*, in which Dryden defends his choice of the quatrain, or "stanzas of four lines in alternate rhyme, because I have ever judged them more noble and of greater dignity both for the sound and number than any other verse in use amongst us." Further on in his essay he gives some excellent criticism of the nature of wit, and of its proper use, and goes on to a delightful discussion of Ovid, Virgil, and Juvenal. An excellent *Essay on Dramatic Poetry* was published separately in the same year. This was cast into the form of a dialogue between Eugenius (Charles Sackville, Lord Buckhurst), Lisideius (Sir Charles Sedley), Crites (Sir Robert Howard), and Neander (Dryden). In June, 1666, the four friends went down the Thames to listen to the roar of the cannon from the sea-fight with the Dutch. The sound seemed to grow less and less, so that they imagined the Dutch must be retreating, and their talk turned upon the results of victory, one of which would be an influx of bad verse. This led to a discussion of ancient and modern poets, settling down into special talk upon Dramatic Poesie. The famous French rules of the Unities were dealt with, and Lisideius spoke of the beauty of French rhyme, and of his preference for that method of writing rather than the English. Crites also stated his case against rhyme. Neander upheld his rhyme.

An attack was made upon the *Essay*, which Dryden answered in an admirable *Defence*. Another essay, in 1671, was preface to a very bad play, an *Evening's Love*. In it Dryden wrote on behalf of his own methods in comedy, with a remarkable ease of style, and with a resolute and definite attitude in discussion. Shortly after appeared a better piece of prose writing, the *Essay on Heroic Plays*, acting as a preface to the *Conquest of Granada*. The essay contains Dryden's famous criticism of Shakspere and Ben Jonson.

Dryden twice spoke openly against the theories of versification which he had for so long held. In the Prologue to *Aurung-Zebe*, in 1675, he had expressed his intention of giving up rhymed tragedies. In 1678 he added to this some more words; "In my style," he wrote, "I have professed to imitate the divine Shakspere, which, that I might perform more freely, I have disencumbered myself from rhyme."

By 1678 Dryden's prose style was completely formed. The remarkable *Epistle to the Whigs*, prefixed to his poem of the *Medal*, shows him writing a keen and vigorous English with the greatest ease.

In 1700 the best of all his prose essays formed the preface to his book of *Fables*. The style is delightful, full of personal touches which add an extraordinary interest to the work, and with excellent comments on Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Boccaccio, and Chaucer. The remarks upon the last-named form one of the most generous tributes that any great poet has ever paid to another. Dryden, in his appreciation of Chaucer, looked far above the limited range of his contemporaries. "Mr. Cowley" is here reported by Dryden as being of opinion that Chaucer was "a dry, old-fashioned wit, not worth reviving."

There remains one more branch of literature in which Dryden held high place, but from the artistic rather than the scholarly point of view. He admits in a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that in Homer he finds a poet more according to his genius than in Virgil. This preference arises from his "fiery way of writing, which, as it is liable to more faults, so it is capable of more beauties than the exactness and sobriety of Virgil." Exactness in translation was precisely what Dryden could not acquire. He had sufficient knowledge of Greek and Latin and of the Middle English of Chaucer's days to comprehend their meaning and to rewrite their stories lightly and pleasantly in the English of his own time. The special charm of all the originals was necessarily lost, and there is virtually no difference at all between Homer, Virgil, and Chaucer when they have passed through Dryden's hands. Such a defect was probably unnoticed or uncared for in Dryden's days.

60. Dryden's Contemporaries. (1) Clarendon and His History.

Edward Hyde, the Earl of Clarendon, was the only literary man who, with personal knowledge of the times, wrote a history of the struggle between Charles the First and the Commonwealth. He died in 1674, and his *History of the Rebellion* was not published until thirty years later, so his literary work, like *Paradise Lost*, had little influence over the generation to which its author belonged.

Hyde came of a good country family, but was never a wealthy man. He studied law under his uncle, Nicholas Hyde, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and entered Parliament at a comparatively early age. His attachment to the principles of Church government drew him away from the popular party; the obvious intention of the Commons was to increase their power at the expense of the prerogative, and the members were

marked with distinct anti-Church tendencies. Clarendon's attitude attracted the king, and in 1641 he became, without holding any official position, Charles' confidential adviser and the real leader of the Royalist party in the Commons. He strongly disapproved of Charles' attempt to seize the Five Members, but he worked hard to form the party of Constitutional Royalists, which gave the king a policy and made a party gather round him.

In 1643 Clarendon was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, and became the chief adviser of the king. For fourteen years he was on the continent, working hard to bring about the Restoration; and, being made Lord Chancellor in 1658, in two years' time he was the head of Charles the Second's administration. He was created Earl of Clarendon in 1661, and his daughter, Lady Anne Hyde, was married in the same year to the Duke of York, brother to Charles the Second, and afterwards king.

The marriage of his daughter at first seemed to endanger his power, but after the lapse of a little time it made Clarendon still stronger. The main object of his policy was to maintain the balance of the Constitution against both king and Parliament. Accordingly, when he might have secured for Charles the Second a revenue which would have made the king independent of Parliament, he preferred not to do so. On the other hand, when the Cavaliers in the House of Commons wished to repeal the Act of Indemnity, he set his influence against it, and kept the king to his promises. He often said it was the making of these promises that brought the king home, and it was the keeping of them that kept him at home.

With regard to ecclesiastical matters, he tried to restore the condition of things which had existed before 1640. Charles, in the Declaration of Breda, had held out promises to the Nonconformists of indulgence which were not fulfilled. Clarendon, after attempting a compromise with the Presbyterians, urged the re-establishment of the ecclesiastical system, and supported the Act of Uniformity of 1662, which bade the use of the Book of Common Prayer, and removed from the Church many ministers who had not been episcopally ordained.

Clarendon continued the alliance with France which had been begun under Cromwell, and opposed the war with Holland in 1665, but continued in office, and was held responsible when it was mismanaged. In 1667 he was dismissed from the Chancellorship, and the House of Commons impeached him for intending to introduce arbitrary government and for treachery during the Dutch War. Charles ordered him to take refuge in France, which he did, and remained there till his death in 1674.

Clarendon was honest as a statesman and constant to his principles. He was always truly attached to the Church, and used his influence with both Charles I. and Charles II. to prevent any changes from being made in its government or discipline. For the Constitution he had a great reverence and esteem. He believed that the subject suffered by any injury to the prerogative, and that equally the prerogative was hurt when the Crown exceeded its limits.

During the earlier part of his life on the continent Clarendon wrote the first seven books of his *History of the Rebellion*, in which his object was to explain to posterity the causes of its success, and to "vindicate the memory of those few who, out of duty and conscience, had opposed and resisted that torrent." The rest of the *History* was written in later years. Between 1668 and 1670 Clarendon had set to work on an autobiography in which he told his life's experience down to the Restoration, and wrote over again a great deal that he had already put into his *History*. He then decided to unite the two works, so that it stands now in two parts—the first historical, the second biographical—the first being the more accurate and valuable of the two.

Clarendon ranked high in literary skill. He was master of a musical phrase, though he fell sometimes into the error of making his sentences too long and complicated. His power of narrative was great, he had a singular insight into the importance or insignificance of political events, and no other writer has surpassed him in the work of just and brilliant portraiture. The faculties which he could apply to persons he could utilise equally well when dealing with facts. His battle scenes, full of characters and events, are as minute and careful as his studies of individuals.

Capture of the Spanish West India Fleet.

"When Admiral Blake had subdued the Turks of Tunis and Algiers, and betaken himself to the coast of Spain, and by the attempt of Hispaniola and the possession of Jamaica, the war was sufficiently declared against the Catholic king, Montague, a young gentleman of a good family, who had been drawn into the party of Cromwell, and served under him as a colonel in his army with much courage, was sent with an addition of ships to join with Blake, and joined in commission of admiral and general with him; Blake finding himself much indisposed in his health, and having desired that another might be sent to assist him, and to take care of the fleet, if worse should befall him. Upon his arrival with the fleet, they lay long before Cales in expectation of the Spanish West India fleet, and to keep in all ships from going out to give notice of their being there. After

Hispaniola, or Hayti, one of the West India Islands.
Cales, long the English name for Cadiz.

some months' attendance, they were at last compelled to remove their station, that they might get fresh water, and some other provisions which they wanted, and so drew off to a convenient bay in Portugal, and left a squadron of ships to watch the Spanish fleet, which within a very short time after the remove of the English fleet came upon the coast; and before they were discovered by the commander of the squadron, who was to the leeward, made their way so fast that, when he got up with them (though he was inferior to them in number), they rather thought of saving their wealth by flight, than of defending themselves; and so the Spanish admiral run on shore in the bay, and the vice-admiral, in which was the vice-king of Mexico with his wife and sons and daughters, was fired by themselves to prevent being taken; in which the poor gentleman himself, his wife, and his eldest daughter, perished; his other daughters, and his two sons, and near one hundred others, were saved by the English, who took the rear-admiral and two other ships very richly laden, which, together with the prisoners, were sent into England, the rest escaped into Gibraltar.

"The ships which were sent for England arrived at Portsmouth; and though they might with less charge have continued their voyage by sea to London, Cromwell thought it would make more noise, if all the bullion, which was of great value, was landed at Portsmouth; from whence it was brought by land in many carts to London, and so carried through the city to the Tower to be there coined."

The Crowning Victory.

"But that which made a noise indeed, and crowned his successes, was the victory his fleet, under the command of Blake, had obtained over the Spaniard; which, in truth, with all its circumstances, was very wonderful, and will never be forgotten in Spain and the Canaries. That fleet had rode out all the winter storms before Cales and the coast of Portugal, after they had sent home those former ships which they had taken of the West Indian Fleet, and understood by the prisoners that the other fleet from Peru, which is always much richer than that of Mexico, was undoubtedly at sea, and would be on the coast by the beginning of the spring, if they received not advertisement of the presence of the English fleet; in which case they were most like to stay at the Canaries. The admirals concluded that, notwithstanding all they had done or could do to block up Cales, that one way or other they would not be without that advertisement; and therefore resolved to sail with the whole fleet to the length of the Canaries, that, if it were possible, they might meet with the galleons before they came thither; and if they should be first got in thither, they would then consider what was to be done.

"And with this resolution they stood for the Canaries, and about the middle of April came thither; and found that the galleons were got thither before them, and had placed themselves, as they thought, in safety. The smaller ships, being ten in number, lay in a semicircle, moored along the shore; and the six great galleons (the fleet consisting of sixteen good ships), which could not come so near the shore, lay with their broadsides towards the offing. And besides this good posture in which all the ships lay, they were covered with a strong castle well furnished with guns; and there were six or seven small forts, raised in the most advantageous places of the bay, every one of them furnished with six good pieces of cannon; so that they were without the least apprehension of

Attendance, waiting and watching.

their security, or imagination that any men would be so desperate as to assault them upon such apparent disadvantage.

"When the English fleet came to the mouth of the bay of Santa Cruz, and the general saw in what posture the Spaniards lay, and thought it impossible to bring off any of the galleons; however, he resolved to burn them (which was by many thought to be equally impossible), and sent Captain Stayner with a squadron of the best ships to fall upon the galleons; which he did very resolutely; whilst other frigates entertained the forts and lesser breastworks with continual broadsides, to hinder their firing. And so the generals coming up with the whole fleet, after full four hours' fight, they drove the Spaniards from their ships, and possessed them; yet found that their work was not done; and that it was not only impossible to carry away the ships which they had taken, but that the wind that had brought them into the bay, and enabled them to conquer the enemy, would not serve to carry them out again; so that they lay exposed to all the cannon from the shore, which thundered upon them. However, they resolved to do what was in their power; and so, discharging their broadsides upon the forts and land, where they did great execution, they set fire to every ship, galleons and others, and burned every one of them; which they had no sooner done but the wind turned, and carried the whole fleet without loss of one ship out of the bay, and put them safe to sea again.

"The whole action was so miraculous that all men who knew the place concluded that no sober men, with what courage soever endued, would ever undertake it; and they could hardly persuade themselves to believe what they had done; whilst the Spaniards comforted themselves with the belief that they were devils, and not men, had destroyed them in such a manner. So much a strong resolution of bold and courageous men can bring to pass, that no resistance and advantage of ground can disappoint them. And it can hardly be imagined how small loss the English sustained in this unparalleled action; no one ship being left behind, and the killed and wounded not exceeding two hundred men, when the slaughter on board the Spanish ships, and on the shore, was incredible."

(2) Pepys, Evelyn, Sir William Temple.

1. First to be noticed are a few writers in prose—two of them famous for their *Diaries*, and another for his memoirs. These men are Samuel Pepys, John Evelyn, and Sir William Temple. Pepys was the son of an unsuccessful man who had fallen into the trade of tailoring. He was not able to do much for his children, but Sir Edward Montagu, afterwards Earl of Sandwich, to whom he was related, was always kind to him, and especially to his son Samuel. Samuel was consequently able to go to St. Paul's School and to Cambridge, where, in Magdalen, his old college, the Pepysian Library is still preserved. Samuel Pepys married, at twenty-three, Miss Elizabeth St. Michel, a beautiful girl of the age of fifteen. The marriage was a thoroughly happy one, and how well the young couple went through their trial of poverty is shown by an entry in the *Diary* in after times when they had been wed for twelve years.

"Feb. 25th, 1666-7. Talked with pleasure with my poor wife, how she used to make coal fires, and wash my clothes with her own hand for me,

poor wretch! in our little room at my Lord Sandwich's, for which I ought ever to love and admire her, and do: and persuade myself she would do the same thing again. if God should reduce us to it."

Persuade, used here in the sense of *convince*.

Pepys accompanied his kinsman when Lord Sandwich went as admiral to the Sound in 1658, and on his return home was appointed to a clerkship at the Exchequer. After the Restoration he was promoted to the Admiralty, where he became a trusted official, and, as Clerk of the Acts, a busy and most excellent member of the Navy Board. In 1669 he suffered from a weakness of the eyes, and, discontinuing his *Diary*, he obtained leave to take a tour in France and Holland. Shortly after this his wife died, and, as she was supposed to be a Roman Catholic, Pepys was accused of concealed Romanism. This charge was made to prevent him from being elected to Parliament. The proceedings came to nothing; but in 1679 Pepys was in prison for a short time on an assertion being made that he was connected with the Popish Plot. It then became necessary for him to retire from the Admiralty. The charge proved an absurd one, and he was put into office again in 1684, having during the interval been on a mission for the public service over to Tangier. The king, who had a good knowledge of naval affairs, realised how valuable a public servant Pepys had become, and saw that he attained to high positions. After the Revolution he was dismissed by the Whigs, and lived quietly until his death in 1703.

His *Diary* extends from 1660, when he was twenty-seven years of age, to 1669, when his eyes broke down. The matter of the *Diary* is of all sorts and all kinds: political memoranda, at the time, of the greatest importance; descriptions of public men, for Pepys alone, the *Diary* being written in shorthand; gossip about his wife and neighbours; accounts of and vigorous comments upon all the plays that he saw; with excellent descriptions of the days of the Fire. Pepys wrote his *Diary* as a perfectly private document. He had no conception that subsequent generations would be able to read his cipher and to learn the details of his life. Hence the book is interesting, because it is perfectly natural, an unconscious revelation of a human character. Probably the worst criticism ever passed upon it is that which labels Pepys as a bourgeois, for he was, above all things, a man of good breeding and good feeling. Pepys' views of Shakspere are charming, because they are so perfectly frank. "September 29th, 1662. To the King's Theatre, where we saw the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which I had never seen before, and never shall again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life." With regard to the *Tempest*, he is equally

outspoken: "Nov. 7th, 1667. At noon resolved to go to see the *Tempest*, an old play of Shakspere's, acted, I hear, the first day. The house mighty full; the king and court there, and the most innocent play that ever I saw. . . . The play has no great wit, but yet good above ordinary plays." Again, with regard to *Othello*, in his earlier years: "Oct. 11th, 1660. In the Park we met with Mr. Salisbury, who took Mr. Creed and me to the Cockpit to see the *Moore of Venice*, which was well done. Burt acted the Moore; by the same token a very pretty lady that sat by me, called out, to see Desdemona smothered." Six years afterwards his views changed: "Aug. 20th, 1666. To Deptford by water, reading *Othello, Moore of Venice*, which I ever heretofore esteemed a mighty good play, but having so lately read *The Adventures of Five Houres*, it seems a mean thing." Matters of the table were of great interest to Pepys: "Feb. 10th, 1688-9. To White Hall, I stayed till the Duke of York came from hunting, which he did by and by, and when dressed did come out to dinner, and there I waited. And he did mightily magnify his sauce, which he did then eat with everything, and said it was the best sauce in the world, it being taught him by the Spanish Ambassador; made of some parsley and a dry toast, beat in a mortar together with vinegar, salt, and a little pepper; he eats it with flesh, or fowl, or fish. And then he did mightily commend some new sort of wine lately found out, called Navarr wine, which I tasted, and is, I think, good wine; but I did like better the notion of the sauce, and by and bye did taste it, and liked it mightily."

John Evelyn, also a diarist and an accomplished man of science, was different in many respects from Pepys, partly because his experiences of life had been far more easy. The son of a country squire, Evelyn had ample means; and, avoiding England during the Civil War, travelled in France and Italy, returning home in 1651. He brought home a beautiful and a clever wife, and lived quietly at his house, holding strong Royalist opinions, and avoiding any pledge to the Covenant. The regular tenor of his life was shown by his *Diary*, which began with an account of his own birth in 1620, became very full after his father's death in 1640, and was continued to the end of his own life in 1706. He produced many books on scientific subjects, but the only one read now is his *Sylva*, a report on the condition of timber in England in the year 1664. His literary fame rests, however, upon his *Diary*, a very different work from that of Pepys. Evelyn could not put down all his memoranda for so many years without some idea of their ultimate publication. The writing of the *Diary* is therefore somewhat formal, very unlike the personal chit-chat and self-

interrogation of Pepys. His writing is in a charmingly unaffected style, for he was a man of the sweetest temper and good feeling, with all the polish of a refined life and a cultivated society. His prose stands very high among the writers of his time, but is too much concerned with scientific matters to hold a place in general literature.

Sir William Temple was the writer of some essays and some interesting memoirs, but his life belongs more to the political world than to the world of letters. He was the son of Sir John Temple, Master of the Rolls in Ireland, and was at Cambridge as an undergraduate for two years during the time of the Civil War. He then left the University without taking a degree, and travelled on the continent, acquiring a good knowledge of Spanish and French. On his return to England he married, and lived in Ireland during the last years of the Commonwealth. In 1663 he became a supporter of Lord Arlington, by whom he was sent as Resident to the Viceregal Court at Brussels. Here Temple found great opportunities for developing his knowledge and practice of diplomacy. John de Witt, who was the leading statesman in Holland at the time, persuaded Temple that there was a general wish for a coalition to save Flanders. Temple urged this view strongly upon the English ministers, and the fall of Clarendon caused the new ministry of 1668 to employ Temple in negotiations with the Dutch. This led to the Triple Alliance of England, Holland, and Sweden, and to the temporary check of Louis XIV.

Temple's policy was very short-lived, and the terms of the Treaty of Dover, arranged between Louis the Fourteenth and Charles the Second, made it necessary for the ministry to throw over the author of the Triple Alliance. Temple was therefore dismissed from his office in 1671. On the fall of the Cabal he was offered the Secretaryship of State, but, refusing this appointment, was sent as English Ambassador to the Hague. In 1679 a great disturbance arose in England from rumours of a Popish Plot, an imaginary conspiracy, the conception of which was chiefly due to the men who made money by posing as informers against it. Temple was sent for by Charles the Second, as the only man who could calm the scare. Temple proposed that a government should be made of men of all parties, that room should be obtained for it by dissolving the Privy Council, and that a new council of thirty members should be appointed. The king was to govern by the constant advice of this body, and was not to reserve any part of the public business for a private committee. The new council was duly called together, but proved unworkable. There was no tie of any kind to bind all the members together, and an interior cabinet was formed, consisting of

Temple, Halifax, Essex, and Sunderland. From this cabinet Temple gradually found himself ousted, so in 1681 he retired altogether from public life.

Temple was skilful as a diplomatist, but unsuccessful as a statesman. He is not remembered for his political life save in so far as his *Memoirs* give a curious and valuable picture of the inner circle of politics at the time. His *Essays*, of which there are only four, deal with *Ancient and Modern Learning*, *The Gardens of Epicurus*, *Heroic Virtue*, and *Poetry*. The matter of these essays is not of much value, but their manner is remarkable, considering the state of English literature when Temple lived. There was about them a foretaste of times to come, of which Temple seems to have been the only cognisant man in England. The special peculiarities of the century were entirely absent, and Temple's intimate acquaintance with French was clearly shown. His prose work proved to be something entirely new, and paved the way for Addison, and to a certain extent for Steele.

(3) Philosophy and Theological Prose.

It is interesting in the present day to look back to the seventeenth century, when the most learned men in England disputed upon bases of fable. Sir Robert Filmer, a Cambridge man, of Trinity College, issued in 1646 a treatise entitled *The Anarchy of Mixed or Limited Monarchy*. In this book the doctrine of absolute monarchy was upheld on account of its being based upon patriarchal authority. The view was accepted that every person in the world was descended from Adam. Filmer also wrote, about 1642, but did not publish during his life, another treatise, *Patriarcha*, upholding the absolute supremacy of the Crown.

When *Patriarcha* did appear in 1680, John Locke replied to it in one of his *Two Treatises of Government*. He confuted the Adam argument, but put in its place a theory of contract of mutual rights and obligations between ruler and ruled. This, he argued, was entered into in primitive days. He did not appear to see that this was only a multiplication of the idea of Adam.

Algernon Sidney, son of the second Earl of Leicester, entered into the discussion with his *Discourse concerning Government*, a singularly attractive book from the point of view of literature. The manner of the treatise exactly reflects the character of the writer; the tone is proud, the spirit untamed.

Sidney was the son of two loyalists, but believed himself a Republican. He served the Commonwealth in the Civil War, and then strongly opposed Cromwell's seizure of the royal

power. His work is more attractive than that of Locke, not for any reason of connection with the subject, but because the style is both impulsive and dignified, and throws a considerable light upon many sides of the author's character. His writing can be regarded as one of the most satisfactory results of seventeenth century English prose.

Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, a native of Edinburgh, became Divinity Professor at Glasgow, but in 1674 found it advisable to settle in London, and accepted the appointment of preacher at the Rolls Chapel. Charles the Second regarded him with a certain amount of respect, but James the Second proved inimical. Burnet in consequence moved over to Holland, returning with William the Third in 1688. As Bishop of Salisbury he won a great repute for his conduct and charity while he held the See. He published his *History of the Reformation* at intervals during thirty-five years. The first volume, appearing in 1679, appealed to the dislike for Catholicism which was then prevalent in the country, and Burnet received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, with a desire expressed that he would continue the work. The second volume was done by 1681, the third not until 1718. Opinions have differed considerably as to the value of Burnet's work. The *History* is not the production of a completely scholarly mind. It is wide and correct in its general views, and aims at impartiality, a merit admitted even by those who were his enemies; it is a book to be read from the fact that it contains much information concerning transactions in which Burnet had a personal share.

The *History of his Own Times* came out between 1723 and 1734. This is lacking in the same points which are upon the *History of the Reformation*, though an undoubted charm lies in the book from the portraits of those royal and other distinguished persons with whom Burnet came into personal official contact. A falling off is seen in his account of Queen Anne's reign, when he was not so much in touch with affairs as in his younger days.

A more interesting personage is John Locke, born in 1632, the son of a lawyer. The boy was sent to Westminster, and afterwards to Oxford, where he eventually became tutor of his college; but in 1665 he decided upon seeing something of a more active life, and went to Cleve, with the English ambassador to the Elector of Brandenburg, as the ambassador's secretary. In 1666 he made the acquaintance of Shaftesbury, then Lord Ashley, at Oxford, who took so great a fancy to him as to insist on his coming to live with the Shaftesbury family. For some time he seems to have contemplated a profession, but in his

fortieth year his health broke down, and he was virtually an invalid for the rest of his life. In 1672 his friend the Earl of Shaftesbury secured for him the post of Secretary of Presentations; in 1673 he would not consent to accept the Treaty of Dover, and was consequently dismissed. With Shaftesbury he still remained friends, and accompanied him to Holland. Shaftesbury died there in 1683, and Locke remained. Charles the Second had given orders that, in consequence of his attachment to Shaftesbury, Locke should be deprived of his studentship at Oxford. When Locke stayed in Holland, James the Second demanded him of the States on the plea that he had been concerned with Monmouth's rebellion. In 1687 Locke found safe shelter in Amsterdam, and finished his *Essay on the Human Understanding* in the same year. Two years later his first letter *On Toleration*, written in Latin, was published at Gouda. When the Revolution was an accomplished fact, Locke returned to England in the fleet of the Princess of Orange. He was given a charming country home by his friend, Sir Thomas Masham; and in 1695 the merit of his writings caused him to be made a Commissioner of Trade and Plantations. After five years' work he resigned his seat, and died at Masham's house in 1704.

Locke spoke and wrote in singularly plain English. He was himself a man of the greatest simplicity in life, and always ready to laugh at those who affected to be grave. His first book, *On Toleration*, had taken up the position that toleration was the characteristic mark of the true Church. In 1689 and 1690 he published the *Two Treatises of Government*, one of which, his *Patriarcha*, has already been mentioned. In the second Locke set forth the principles of civil government as understood by the Revolutionary politicians. In his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, he dealt with the necessity of finding "the bounds beyond which argument is vain." Locke's other works included his *Thoughts concerning Education*, a book excellent in theory, and two on religious subjects, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* and *An Essay on the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles, by consulting St. Paul himself.* All these works are marked by their pure and clear employment of language.

In 1698 Jeremy Collier, a Non-juring clergyman, published his *View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*; the book was widely read at the time, and has since been much discussed. His attack on the stage was plain-spoken, and contained a great amount of truth; but it was not done in the wisest way, and Addison's comments, in subsequent years, probably brought about a far greater effect.

XVII. THE EARLIER WORK OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

61. Prose Writers of the Time.

The reign of Queen Anne has often been called the Augustan age of English literature. The term is sometimes extended in two directions, and made to include the entire work of Dryden, who died before the queen came to the throne, and of Pope, who survived her for thirty years. Its use in this way was approved by Dr. Johnson, when he made his comparison between Dryden and the Emperor Augustus. Johnson declared that the influence of Dryden upon the English language had resembled the influence of Augustus upon Rome. He had found Rome brick, and left it marble; and in English Dryden had wrought a similar effect. The criticism, at the present day, has been condemned as vague and comprehensive.

So far as his contemporaries and immediate predecessors were concerned, Dryden did a yeoman's work, though he cannot be regarded as having improved either Chaucer or Spenser; and he certainly was not the superior of Milton. Short phrases, however, more expressive than exact, are not to be treated as definite laws; and the grouping together of Dryden and Pope, with the famous prose-writers of the time and one or two of the poets contemporary with Pope, is a by no means inconvenient arrangement in the study of English literature.

We therefore proceed to consider the prose-writers of the time, some of whom had finished their best work before Pope began. The first name to be dealt with is that of a great writer of satirical prose, as Dryden had been of satirical verse.

62. Jonathan Swift.

Swift, the son of English parents, was born at Dublin in 1667. He did not distinguish himself either at school or at the university, and had some difficulty in obtaining a degree. In his nineteenth year he became secretary to Sir William Temple, to whom his mother was related; and held the post at Moor Park, Sir William's house near Farnham, in Surrey, until 1692.

Temple treated Swift with a certain kindness, and in a manner to his advantage, though in a cold and formal way. He sent Swift for a time to Oxford, where the Bachelor's degree of Dublin was accepted, and Swift was enabled to proceed to an Oxford Master of Arts. On his return from Oxford, Swift was employed by Temple in many "affairs of great importance"; yet, in all his life, Swift never lost a somewhat bitter remembrance of Temple's patronage. In 1694 Swift broke down with a serious illness, when there appeared the first symptoms

of the brain malady which eventually caused his death. He was sent to Ireland for his health; and on getting stronger, he took Holy Orders, and held a small living for two years. He then returned to Sir William Temple, who had left Moor Park, and was living at Sheen, where King William often paid an informal visit. The king was much attracted by Swift's capacities, and showed him considerable kindness. At about this time Temple was deeply engaged in the argument that had arisen in the scholarly world over the epistles said to have been written by Phalaris, a Tyrant of Agrigentum, about the middle of the 6th century B.C.

Richard Bentley, the son of a small farmer in Yorkshire, had developed into a scholar; and was the king's librarian, when, in 1695, an undergraduate at Oxford, the Hon. Charles Boyle, issued an edition of the Phalaris epistles, and in his preface made an unpleasant reference to Bentley. A book in 1697, to which Bentley had written the preface, gave him an opportunity to reply to this attack. He therefore denied the authenticity of the letters which Boyle attributed to Phalaris. Boyle was not scholar enough to prove his case; but Atterbury, another Oxford man, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, took up the cudgels against Bentley, and a violent dispute arose. Sir William Temple was deeply interested in the controversy, and Swift began his literary career by writing the *Battle of the Books*. Swift sided with Temple and Boyle; and concluded his satire with an admirable sketch of a battle, done after the Homeric method, in which the opponents of the ancients, led by Bentley, were described as being slain. As a matter of fact, in 1699, Bentley, publishing a *Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris*, won the day, and established the classical scholars' position. The brilliancy of the *Battle of the Books*, although it was on the losing side, when done by so young a man, marked out Swift as giving great promise for the future. It was written during the years 1696 and 1697. The following extract, an account of the famous battle, with which the book closes, shows the wit and vigour of the writing:

"And as a Woman in a little House, that gets a painful Livelihood by Spinning; if chance her Geese be scattered o'er the Common, she courses round the Plain from side to side, compelling here and there the Stragglers to the Flock. They cackle loud, and flutter o'er the Champian. So Boyl pursued, so fled this pair of Friends; finding at length their Flight was vain, they bravely joyn'd, and drew themselves in Phalanx. First Bentley threw a Spear with all his Force; but *Pallas* came unseen, and in the Air took off the Point, and clapped on one of Lead, which after

Champian, a flat, open piece of country.
In Phalanx, like a body of infantry.

a dead Bang against the Enemy's Shield, fell blunted to the ground. Then Boyl, observing well his Time, took a Launce of wondrous Length and Sharpness; and with unusual Force, darted the weapon. Bentley saw his Fate approach, and flanking down his Arms, close to his Ribs, to save his Body; in went the Point, passing through Arm and Side, nor stopt, nor spent its Force, till it had also pierced the valiant Wotton, who, going to sustain his dying Friend, shared his Fate. As when a skilful Cook has trussed a Brace of Woodcocks, he, with iron Skewer, pierces the tender sides of both, their Legs and Wings close pinion'd to their Ribs; so was this pair of Friends transfix'd, till down they fell, joyn'd in their Lives, joyn'd in their Deaths; so closely joyn'd that *Charon* will mistake them both for one, and waft them over *Styx* for half his Fare. Farewell, beloved, loving Pair; Few Equals have you left behind; And happy and immortal shall you be, if all my Wit and Eloquence can make you."

It seems to have been at about the same period that Swift wrote an equally brilliant book, in the form of a satire upon the various divisions of the Christian Church. This was called the *Tale of a Tub*, a name from what was supposed to be a custom among sailors of throwing a tub overboard to frighten a whale from rolling against their ship. In the same way the story was supposed to be a tub, thrown to the busybodies who were constantly disputing over religious theories, in the hope that they would leave off interfering with the orthodox Church. So, after two or three quaint dedications, prefaces, and discourses, the tale begins, telling of a man who dies, leaving legacies to his three sons, Peter, the Church of Rome; Martin, the Church of England; and Jack, the Dissenter. The tale shows how they dealt with the coats bequeathed to each by their father, who had especially told them to keep these coats clean. Everybody admitted the wit and genius of the book, yet it blocked the way of Swift's preferment, and prevented him from ever becoming a bishop. Queen Mary, the wife of William the Third, steadfastly opposed any chance of his promotion.

While he was thus busy with his literary work, Swift, during the same time, entered upon the greatest experience of life, by falling in love with Esther Johnson, who was supposed to be the daughter of Temple's steward. Although Swift was never a poet, his verses to Stella, as he called her, were pretty and touching. They show a side of his character, entirely unknown to the outside world of his time.

"When on my sickly couch I lay,
Impatient both of night and day,
Lamenting, in unmanly strains,
Called every power to ease my pains;
Then Stella ran to my relief
With cheerful face and inward grief;
And though by Heaven's severe decree
She suffers hourly more than me,

No cruel master could require
From slaves employed for daily hire
What Stella, by her friendship warmed,
With vigour and delight performed;
My sinking spirit now supplies
With cordials in her hands and eyes,
Now, with a soft and silent tread
Unheard, she moves about my bed. . . .
Best pattern of true friends, beware;
You pay too dearly for your care
If, while your tenderness secures
My life, it must endanger yours."

The last four lines are of especial meaning, for Stella was just recovering from an illness herself when she came to comfort and console her lover.

In 1700 Sir William Temple died, leaving a thousand pounds to Esther and a legacy to Swift, who was also to act as his literary executor. Swift dedicated his edition of Temple's writings to the king; and went to Ireland as secretary to the Earl of Berkeley, who had been made one of the Lords Justices in Ireland. Lord Berkeley then presented him with the livings of Rathbeggan and Laracor, in the county of Meath; and, soon after, Swift and Esther Johnson went through a formal marriage, though they never lived together. Swift knew that he was threatened with brain disease, and dared not run the risk of passing it on.

Swift's training under Temple had taught him much of the secrets of party; and in 1701 he made his first appearance as a Whig champion, with a pamphlet entitled *The Contests and Dissensions between the Nobles and Commons in Athens and Rome.*

In the previous year John Somers, the Lord Keeper, or, in modern phrase, Lord Chancellor, was dismissed from his office, in consequence of attacks made upon him by the Tories in the Commons. Swift, availing himself of this opportunity, disguised the English politicians under the cloak of Greek and Roman names. Lord Somers was called Aristides; Lord Halifax, the Earl of Portland, and the Earl of Orford, designated as Pericles, Phocion, and Themistocles, all celebrated Athenian statesmen, were also attacked by the Commons; but the charges against them could not be justified. The pamphlet met with great success; and it was declared to be the work of Bishop Burnet, originally chaplain to King William, for years a dangerous enemy to the Stuart cause. He hastily denied the authorship; so Swift, making no secret of it, was taken into favour by the Whigs. This put him into a precarious position, since he declared himself to be a High Churchman, while professing that he was a Whig. About 1705 he seems to have made the

acquaintance of Addison, and was admitted to the literary circles that foregathered at Will's coffee-house. During these years, and especially in 1708, he wrote many tracts on controversial points of religion and politics. He then attained the reputation of being the most celebrated writer of pamphlets. He had definitely settled in London, and prepared a volume of *Miscellanies*, which were not published till some years later; but in 1708 the *Sentiments of a Church of England Man*, advocating moderation both in political and religious strife, gave offence to the leaders of the Whig party for its reproof of many actions of the Dissenters. The same year saw, too, *An Argument against abolishing Christianity*, in which Swift, with grave humour, advocated a proposal to utilise the revenues of the Church for the purpose of endowing the studies of two hundred sceptics. The irony of the piece was most ingenious; though many of those for whose sake Swift was writing misunderstood the humour altogether, and believed that he was a dangerous enemy, working for the opposite side. In 1709 he brought out a still more remarkable tract, his *Project for the Advancement of Religion*. The scandalous moral state of the community seemed shocking to him, and he wrote with flaming wrath against sin and evil-living. Queen Anne and the Archbishop of York read the tract, and thought very highly of it; but the matter was not one to be met by legislation.

To show how versatile was Swift's mind, and how he dealt with every subject in an equally skilful manner, it is advisable to remember that during these same years, full of hard and stern political work and earnest religious teaching, he amused his readers with the innocent merriment of the Bickerstaff controversy, and brought Steele, Prior, and Congreve to his aid. Swift's humour, which of late years has been much condemned, is hardly comprehensible to the present self-conscious age.

Swift's verses of this time often show his cheerful and witty feeling. Those dealing with the scenes and sights of London, tell in verse what Hogarth told in line. A picture of the waking of the great city is typical of his vigorous and effective work:

> "Now hardly here and there a hackney coach,
> Appearing, show'd the ruddy morn's approach.
> The slip shod 'prentice from his master's door
> Had pared the dirt, and sprinkled round the floor.
> Now Moll had whirl'd her mop with dext'rous airs,
> Prepared to scrub the entry and the stairs.
> The youth with broomy stumps began to trace
> The kennel's edge, where wheels had worn the place.

Kennel, the gutter, corrupted from the Middle English *chanel*. Latin, *canalis*. Not connected with *kennel*, a house for dogs, from Norman French *chenil*, and Latin *canis*.

The small-coal man was heard with cadence deep,
Till drown'd in shriller notes of chimney-sweep:
Duns at his lordship's gate began to meet;
And brickdust Moll had scream'd through half the street.
The turnkey now his flock returning sees
Duly let out a-nights to steal for fees:
The watchful bailiffs take their silent stands,
And schoolboys lag with satchels in their hands."

Swift's greatest powers began in 1710, when he left the Whigs, on account of their refusal to grant certain privileges to the Irish clergy. He then joined the Tory party; and for some time took the editorship of their journal, *The Examiner*. Addison and Steele, who were both Whigs, constantly wrote for the Whig cause. Swift, with his vigorous prose, demolished Addison's finer style; and even Steele, with all his ingenuity, could make no headway against it. In 1711, the papers which Swift had collected three years before, under the name of *Miscellanies*, were surreptitiously published. They contained the best of all his polemical writings, a *Letter on the Sacramental Test*. The interest of this has faded after many years, though the rest of the contents have still considerable life. There were lampoons directed against Vanbrugh, a man who combined the functions of a dramatist and an architect; there was an excellent imitation of Ovid, which had been subjected to very careful criticism by Addison; there was a brilliant description of Lord Godolphin breaking his treasurer's staff; and more verses, in good heroics, of London life.

It is interesting to notice how in these years, when Swift was the companion of great ministers and exercised an influence in the unseen life of politics, he regularly wrote letters to Stella, and compiled a *Journal* intended only for her private use. This, on its publication after his death, proved to be the most charming of all his writings. It is delightful for the light it throws on the manners of the Court, and of London; and is full of the "little language," in which, as if she were a tiny child, he addressed his dear Esther. It shows Swift in an attitude never revealed by his set writings, and proves him to have been a man of true and deep affection for those whom he had learned to love.

Through the medium of the *Letters* and the *Journal*, Swift was able to enjoy the companionship of a congenial nature, which almost removed the shadow that darkened the whole of his life. When, over-worked and worried, he looked upon his fellow-creatures from a distorted point of view, it relieved him to turn to the pure spirit who always had him foremost in her thoughts, and so obtain some peace for his fevered mind.

It will be well now to add a few words with regard to certain

aspects of Swift's literary work. Its great value lies in the fact that, at a time in English literature when every kind of writing, with the exception of comedy, was in a pitiable condition, the genius of Swift led the way for the English prose which became the distinguishing mark of the reign of Queen Anne. Although the *Tale of a Tub* and the *Battle of the Books* were not printed until 1704, two years after the accession of the queen, they had both been written between 1696 and 1697; and their issue came before any of the work of Addison and Steele. The admiration that Addison felt for Swift is shown by the words he inscribed in the copy of his own *Remarks on Italy*, which he presented to Swift: "To Dr. Jonathan Swift, the truest friend and greatest genius of his age." The influence of the *Tatler* and the examples of Swift and Steele developed Addison's capacity for prose; and in the poetical world of the first half of the eighteenth century, Pope himself had been supported and encouraged by Swift's help and sympathy; while Swift, working on different lines from Pope, stands out as the greatest intellectual writer of his time, as Johnson holds the same place in the second half of the century.

It has been well pointed out that Swift's power lay in his originality, by which he moved and influenced the minds of men. His genius made him most famous; by the workings of Fate, he was miserable and disappointed.

In 1712 the *Conduct of the Allies*, a strong political invective, brought about the Peace of Utrecht, and the Tory ministers rewarded Swift with a presentation to the Deanery of St. Patrick's, Dublin. On the death of Queen Anne, he lost all hope of further promotion; and, leaving politics, passed his life for a time away from the world of letters. In 1716 he privately married Esther Johnson, though they always lived apart; and, eight years later, he became a popular hero, on account of his *Drapier's Letters*, written to expose a patent which the Whig government were about to grant for the supplying of Ireland with copper coinage. It was supposed that the Irish would be put to considerable expense, and Swift supported them. Walpole desired to arrest him, and was told it would require ten thousand soldiers to perform the task.

In 1726 *Gulliver's Travels* appeared, in which Swift attempted to vex the whole world. From many points of view the book is a terrible one, but the portions which can be read as fairy tales are amusing and charming. The adventures of Gulliver in Lilliput, the land of the tiniest people, and in Brobdignag, the country of the hugest, are stories which, for realistic description, stand on a level with *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Pilgrim's Progress*. The Lilliputians, a race of pigmies, human creatures

not six inches high, were brave enough to make Gulliver a prisoner when they found him asleep on the seashore after his ship-wreck on their coast. Binding him with innumerable fine cords, they rendered him helpless; and carried him, with infinite difficulty, up the country to their capital city. Here he was loosed from the cords; but the Emperor of Lilliput, in order to secure the safety of his subjects, demanded that Gulliver should allow his pockets to be searched.

"The emperor desired I would not take it ill, if he gave orders to certain proper officers to search me; for probably I might carry about me several weapons, which must needs be dangerous things, if they answered the bulk of so prodigious a person. I said his majesty should be satisfied, for I was ready to strip myself, and turn up my pockets before him. He replied that, by the laws of the kingdom, I must be searched by two of his officers; so I took up the two officers in my hands, put them first into my coat pockets, and then into every other pocket about me, except my two fobs, and another secret pocket I had no mind should be searched. These gentlemen, having pen, ink, and paper about them, made an exact inventory of everything they saw. This inventory I afterwards translated into English, and is, word for word, as follows:

"'*Imprimis*, in the right coat pocket of the Great Man Mountain (for so I interpret the words *Quinbus Flestrin*), after the strictest search, we found only one great piece of coarse cloth, large enough to be a foot-cloth for your majesty's chief room of state. In the left pocket we saw a huge silver chest, with a cover of the same metal, which we the searchers were not able to lift. We desired it should be opened, and one of us, stepping into it, found himself up to the mid leg in a sort of dust, some part whereof flying up to our faces, set us both a-sneezing for several times together. In his right waistcoat pocket we found a prodigious bundle of white thin substances, folded one over another, about the bigness of three men, tied with a strong cable, and marked with black figures; which we humbly conceive to be writings, every letter almost half as large as the palm of our hands. In the left, there was a sort of engine, from the back of which were extended twenty long poles, resembling the palisadoes before your majesty's court; wherewith we conjecture the Man Mountain combs his head, for we did not always trouble him with questions, because we found it a great difficulty to make him understand us. In the large pocket on the right of his middle cover (so I translate the word *ranfu-lo*, by which they meant my breeches), we saw a hollow pillar of iron, about the length of a man, fastened to a strong piece of timber larger than the pillar; and upon one side of the pillar were huge pieces of iron sticking out, cut into strange figures, which we know not what to make of. In the left pocket, another engine of the same kind. In the smaller pocket on the right side, were several round flat pieces of white and red metal, of different bulk; some of the white, which seemed to be silver, were so large and heavy that my comrade and I could hardly lift them. In the left pocket were two black pillars irregularly shaped: we could not, without difficulty, reach the top of them, as we stood at the bottom of his pocket. One of them was covered, and seemed all of a piece; but at the upper end of the other there appeared a white round substance, about twice the bigness of our heads. Within each of these was inclosed a prodigious plate of steel; which, by our orders, we obliged him to shew us, because we apprehended they might be dangerous engines.

He took them out of their cases, and told us that, in his own country, his practice was to shave his beard with one of these, and to cut his meat with the other. There were two pockets which we could not enter: these he called his fobs; they were two large slits cut into the top of his middle cover, but squeezed close by the pressure of his belly. Out of the right fob hung a great silver chain, with a wonderful kind of engine at the bottom. We directed him to draw out whatever was at the end of that chain; which appeared to be a globe, half silver, and half of some transparent metal; for, on the transparent side we saw certain strange figures circularly drawn, and thought we could touch them, till we found our fingers stopped by that lucid substance. He put this engine to our ears, which made an incessant noise, like that of a water-mill. And we conjecture it is either some unknown animal, or the god that he worships; but we are more inclined to the latter opinion, because he assured us (if we understood him right, for he expressed himself very imperfectly) that he seldom did anything without consulting it. He called it his oracle, and said it pointed out the time for every action of his life. From the left fob he took out a net, almost large enough for a fisherman, but contrived to open and shut like a purse, and served him for the same use: we found therein several massy pieces of yellow metal, which, if they be real gold, must be of immense value.

"'Having thus, in obedience to your majesty's commands, diligently searched all his pockets, we observed a girdle about his waist, made of the hide of some prodigious animal; from which, on the left side, hung a sword of the length of five men; and on the right, a bag or pouch divided into two cells, each cell capable of holding three of your majesty's subjects. In one of these cells were several globes, or balls, of a most ponderous metal, about the bigness of our heads, and required a strong hand to lift them: the other cell contained a heap of certain black grains, but of no great bulk or weight, for we could hold above fifty of them in the palms of our hands.

"'This is an exact inventory of what we found about the body of the Man Mountain, who used us with great civility, and due respect to your majesty's commission. Signed and sealed on the fourth day of the eighty-ninth moon of your majesty's auspicious reign.'"

Two years after the publication of *Gulliver*, Esther Johnson died; and from that day the ruin of Swift's life began. In the next year he issued a terrible pamphlet, written in the coldest and most matter-of-fact way, under the title of *A Modest Proposal for preventing the Children of the Poor People in Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents.* The *Proposal* was that, considering the misery of Ireland, young children should be used for food. Such writing was neither irony nor satire. It was more likely brought about by the anguish of his loss in the previous year.

Swift lingered for sixteen years more in great mental and physical misery, the last five being one long state of idiocy. He did not die until his seventy-ninth year.

63. Joseph Addison.

Joseph Addison, born on May Day, 1672, was the son of a Wiltshire clergyman, the Rev. Lancelot Addison, who was for several

years at Dunkirk and Tangier, and acquired some reputation for a book on West Barbary, with *An account of the Present Customs, Sacred, Civil, and Domestic.* He wrote also a *Life of Mahomet*, and an account of the Jews. Shortly before the birth of his son Joseph, Mr. Addison had been made one of the king's chaplains, and in 1677 became Archdeacon of Salisbury, where Joseph was sent to his first school. Six years later the Archdeacon was made Dean of Lichfield, and entered his boy at the Charterhouse. Here Joseph made great friends with a certain Richard Steele, and both lads went on to Oxford, but at different times—Addison leaving the Charterhouse in 1687, and Steele not until two years later. At the beginning of the reign of William and Mary they renewed their schoolboy friendship as Oxford undergraduates. Addison's first literary effort dated from Magdalen College in 1693. Addison, then aged twenty-one, praised Dryden as a translator of the Latin poets. He declared to Dryden that

> "Thy copy casts a fairer light on all,
> And still outshines the bright original."

Dryden was pleased with the fluency of the young poet's verse, and supervised a good deal of his other work.

In 1694 Addison wrote *An Account of the Greatest English Poets*, which dealt with

> "all the Muse possest
> That down from Chaucer's days to Dryden's times
> Have spent their noble rage in British rhimes."

The interest of the verses is with regard to Addison's critical remarks. His taste in some respects was crude. He admits that Chaucer was "a merry bard";

> "But age has rusted what the poet writ,
> Worn out his language, and obscur'd his wit;
> In vain he jests in his unpolish'd strain,
> And tries to make his readers laugh in vain."

Shakspere is ignored altogether, and Spenser is spoken of as

> "Old Spencer next, warm'd with poetic rage
> In antick tales amus'd a barb'rous age;
> But now the mystic tale that pleas'd of yore,
> Can charm an understanding age no more;
> The long-spun allegories fullsome grow,
> While the dull moral lies too plain below."

Cowley was then praised, "whose fault is only wit in its excess." After these curious misunderstandings there is an indication that Addison is not altogether blind to real poetry.

He writes in genuine appreciation of Milton, "unfettered in majestic numbers";

> "Whate'er his pen describes, the more I see,
> Whilst ev'ry verse, array'd in majesty,
> Bold and sublime, my whole attention draws,
> And seems above the critic's nicer laws."

He then goes on in extreme praise of Waller, Denham, Dryden, and Congreve, and finishes with great satisfaction at having expressed the opinion of "an understanding age."

In his twenty-third year Addison addressed to William the Third a paper of verses on the taking of Namur, which were clever, and exhibited an attachment to Whig principles. The attention of the Whig leaders was directed towards the rising young man; and Sir John Somers, eventually Lord Chancellor, and Montague, one of those who had invited William of Orange over to England, became Addison's very good friends. In 1699 Addison brought out at Oxford a volume of clever Latin poems written in a mock heroic style. This book was dedicated to Montague. Addison next wrote a serious poem upon the Peace of Ryswick, and closed his University career with great success. Montague, a man skilled in patronage, persuaded him to give up the idea of entering the Church. He obtained Addison, as a substitute, a government allowance of three hundred a year in order that Addison might travel in France and Italy, and qualify himself for the diplomatic service. Addison accordingly went to Paris, and after some weeks there lived for a year at Blois to learn French and to study Latin authors, with especial reference to Latin geography, and in 1700 passed on into Italy. In December, 1701, he crossed the Alps in winter after what he called "a very troublesome journey." Writing some days after the journey, he declared his head to be "still giddy with mountains and precipices." During this time Addison addressed to Montague, who was now Lord Halifax, a *Letter from Italy*, a poem written in the patriotic spirit, very much after the manner of Waller. Addison waited at Geneva for his appointment as secretary to William the Third with the army in Italy under Prince Eugene, but the sudden death of the king in March, 1702, stopped this preferment. All his friends lost office, and Addison had to fall back under on his own resources. He remained on the continent for about a year and a half longer, apparently taking tutorial work. In September, 1703, he was back in London, lodging up three pair of stairs in the Haymarket. His old friend, Richard Steele, came immediately to him, and Addison was with him when he finished his comedy, *The Tender Husband*, which was produced at the end of 1703. Writing long afterwards of these experiences, Steele uses these touching words,

"I remember when I finished *The Tender Husband*, I told him there was nothing I so ardently wished as that we might sometime publish a work written by us both, which should bear the name of the *Monument*, in memory of our friendship."

Thackeray in his *Esmond* has given a sympathetic picture of Addison's privations. They were relieved by the influence of Lord Halifax, who persuaded the Lord Treasurer, Lord Godolphin, to do something for him. Godolphin was passing gradually from the Tories to the Whigs, and so granted Halifax's request. Addison was appointed a Commissioner of Appeal in the Excise, a post rendered vacant by John Locke being appointed to the Board of Trade. Godolphin then asked Addison to write a poem on the victory of Blenheim. Addison produced a piece called *The Campaign*, written in the conventional heroic couplet which appealed appropriately to the excitement of the time. A great storm had recently passed over England, and Addison made an ingenious comparison between Marlborough manœuvring his troops at Blenheim and the archangel riding in the whirlwind and directing the storm.

After this poem Addison's success continued. In 1706 he was appointed an Under-Secretary of State; in 1707 he went with Lord Halifax on a mission to Hanover, and two years later he became Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; but shortly after the Whig Ministry fell, and Addison lost his office.

A year before, Steele had begun the issue of a paper appearing three times a week, which was known by the name of *The Tatler*. The paper was at first only political; it now became general in its treatment of subjects. Addison, on his return from Ireland, was enlisted at once by Steele to assist on the staff. Eighty numbers appeared before he joined Steele, but his contributions from that time were frequent. Steele has left a most generous recognition of the value of Addison's assistance. "I fared," he writes, "like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid. I was undone by my auxiliary. When I had once called him in I could not exist without him." This happy partnership soon led to larger results. In January, 1711, Steele wrote the last number of *The Tatler*, since as the papers filled four volumes, he thought enough of them had been issued. Two months later the *Spectator* appeared, the main work done by Steele, with Addison's full co-operation. All political questions were excluded, for they had proved the bane of *The Tatler*. The *Spectator* was a brilliant success, and contains some of the best prose in English literature.

In 1713 Addison put on to the stage a stately drama on the subject of *Cato*. Pope was asked to write the Prologue, and *produced a good* piece of workmanship, very suitable as an intro-

duction to the play. *Cato* was taken politically, and Whigs and Tories both tried to benefit by it. It ran in London for thirty-five nights. It was praised even by the foreign critics, and Voltaire declared that Addison was "the first English writer who had composed a regular tragedy." The play is of little interest now, for the political turmoil which made its success has passed away. Yet there are in it one scene and many lines which will always be regarded as great.

In 1714, on the death of Queen Anne, Addison was given another office, and once more became Irish Secretary. In the year after he issued a political paper called the *Freeholder*, in strong support of Whig principles, and of the then existent Whig government. The great charm of the *Freeholder* does not lie in its political qualities, but in the fact that it was illuminated with the same humour that had been so charming in the *Spectator*.

A comedy that ran for three nights at Drury Lane, and an essay *On the Evidences of Christianity*, a subject which Addison was not qualified to discuss, were the principal productions of his closing years. In 1716 he was made Commissioner of Trades and Colonies; and married the Dowager Countess of Warwick. In 1717 he became a Secretary of State, and in 1719 died at Holland House in his forty-seventh year. His tragedy and his poems are forgotten; his essays in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* form one of the glories of English prose.

64. Richard Steele.

Richard Steele, whose early life ran side by side with that of Addison, left Oxford without taking a degree, and entered the army. He held a captaincy in Lord Lucas's Fusiliers, and in 1701 wrote his treatise on *The Christian Hero*, a manual of religious instruction. It went through many editions, but his brother officers looked upon it with great scorn. Steele frankly admits "From being thought no undelightful companion, I was now reckoned a disagreeable fellow." In the same year his play of *The Funeral*, or *Grief à-la-Mode*, was produced with success at Drury Lane, and three other plays appeared in the following years, the last of them, *The Conscious Lovers*, being complimented by a gift of five hundred pounds from George the First. These were all written with a moral purpose, and show the return to decency of the comic stage.

Steele had married young, but his first wife died soon after, leaving him an estate in Barbadoes which yielded him six hundred a year. In 1707 he was appointed Gazetteer, his duties being to keep the official newspaper. This brought him another three hundred. He was also a Gentleman Usher to the Prince

Consort, with a salary of one hundred; yet was always in want of money. He married a widow as a second wife, and had a house in Bloomsbury Square, then a fashionable corner of London; where his servants and household arrangements were "very genteel." Shortly after, the family were wanting in the ordinary necessaries of life. At one time, there was not "an inch of candle, a pound of coal, or a bit of meat in the house."

In 1707 Steele and Swift first became acquainted. Addison and Swift had known one another for two years previously, but all three now came into a regular companionship. Swift, in 1708, had been making a great sensation in London by opposing the follies of prophetical almanacs. Seeing the name of Isaac Bickerstaff on a shoemaker's board, he used it for his own, as a supposed astrologer. This learned man attacked one John Partridge, the chief maker of astrological almanacs, with a definite prediction of the day and hour of his death. The joke, when set rolling, was kept up by other pamphlets announcing that the prophecy was fulfilled, and explaining to Partridge that, whether he believed it or not, he was dead. Partridge, in his next almanac, declared that he was "still living, in health, and they were knaves that reported it otherwise."

At this time Steele was about to produce a new paper. The first number of *The Tatler* accordingly appeared on the 12th of April, 1709, and in it Steele, under the name of Bickerstaff, explained to Partridge that, if he had any shame, he would own himself dead. The name of Bickerstaff thus casually taken, was kept on throughout *The Tatler*.

When the paper first appeared, Swift, Steele, and Addison were all on excellent terms; but by 1710 the feeling of the first two had undergone a change. Swift broke away from them, while Addison and Steele remained friends. After an interval of two months, they began the *Spectator*. It ran with unprecedented success until the end of 1712, then it suddenly stopped; and Steele alone brought out the *Guardian*, which lasted only for 176 numbers. Steele entered Parliament, and published some violent tracts, which led to his ejection from the House of Commons; while his troubles were increased by the unconcealed hatred of Swift.

A change in his fortunes came early in 1715, when he was made supervisor of Drury Lane Theatre. In April he was knighted; and a disagreement with Addison amounted to a definite quarrel. As a result, in 1719, Steele issued a paper called the *Plebeian*, and made violent attacks upon the Peerage Bill. Addison, five days later, replied with the *Old Whig*. On the 6th April appeared the fourth and last number of the *Plebeian*; while Addison, suddenly attacked by dropsy, died

on the 17th of June. There had been no opportunity for reconciliation between the two men, a fact that Steele most deeply lamented.

Steele's opposition to the Peerage Bill had been objectionable to the Government, and they threatened his patent at Drury Lane. He then started a paper, called the *Theatre*, to protect the general interest of the stage. The patent was revoked, by which he lost the most part of his income. In 1721 he was reinstated by the kindness of Sir Robert Walpole. Then to a new edition of a play by Addison he prefixed a letter, declaring in the most generous terms what an affection he had felt for him in spite of their quarrel.

In 1723 Steele's health broke down, and he left London with his affairs in hopeless confusion. He was smitten with palsy, dying in 1729; and though at many times he had been without a penny, it is said that he paid every creditor before his death.

65. Addison and Steele as Writers.

Addison's prose was described by Johnson as a "model of the middle style," a phrase deserving of attention, since before the time of Addison little prose in such a manner had ever been attempted. Yet simple and easy as was Addison's prose, it was always free from flippancy or familiarity. His clear and evenly balanced mind gave him a mastery of words, and in their choice he was fastidious to the last degree. His vocabulary so far as quantity was concerned was smaller than that of other writers, yet it was used so well, that it often proved more effective.

It was Addison's constant care "to avoid all harshness and severity of diction." His melodious flow of language brought about a flexible arrangement of sentences, in which the formalities of a period were avoided, while the effect and balance of the period were preserved. For a task such as that which he undertook, the "bringing of Philosophy out of closets and libraries to dwell in clubs, at tea-tables" and coffee-houses, his gift of simplicity stood him in good stead. The interest which he aroused in the poems of Milton might have been hoped for in vain, had his *Essays* been pragmatically written. The thoughts on Life, Death, and Eternity, which he made familiar to his Saturday readers, would never have impressed them, had they not been worded in a human and lifelike manner. The distinctive features of Addison's style may be summed up in the word limpidity, which applies to him in a greater degree than to any other English prose writer.

His prose may have little of the quality known in literature

as strength; yet this is no reproach to Addison, for strength and vigour were not necessary to his purpose. Violent expression, or an aggressive style, would have been blemishes to his manner of thought. When Milton, in his *Areopagitica*, made use of an effective prose, or Carlyle declaimed against a self-satisfied democracy, it was well that they should both have dipped their pens in gall. Addison, however, dealt with the aspects of life which provoke ridicule and pity rather than wrath; and for such work, the style that he selected was the best, and the execution perfect of its kind.

The true appreciation of his *Essays* depends upon the just understanding of his Humour. Addison was one of the Great Humourists, whose "wit and insight enabled them to set things that falsely claimed to be sublime in a ridiculous light; to show how much folly and absurdity there was in false pretensions; and yet how much of those pretensions were apt to run through our own lives undetected by ourselves."

The Humourists worked in different ways, as their individual temperaments bade them. Some were satirists, others cynics, others masters of pathos, others masters of wit. Addison excelled in irony, a faculty which gave him at the same time his limitations and his strength. A capacity for irony, the most delicate of all arts of the Humourist, necessarily implies a want of pathos. The master of irony praises a victim to the face at the same time that he is jeering at his folly. Addison's paper, *A Very Pretty Poet*, shows this power in full exercise.

A Very Pretty Poet.

"WILL'S COFFEE-HOUSE, *April* 24.

"I yesterday came hither about two hours before the company generally make their appearance, with a design to read over all the newspapers; but, upon my sitting down, I was accosted by Ned Softly, who saw me from a corner in the other end of the room, where I found he had been writing something. He drew a paper of verses out of his pocket, telling me, 'that he had something which would entertain me more agreeably, and that he would desire my judgment upon every line, for that we had time enough before us till the company came in.'

"Ned Softly is a very pretty poet, and a great admirer of easy lines. Waller is his favourite: and as that admirable writer has the best and worst verses of any among our great English poets, Ned Softly has got all the bad ones without book, which he repeats upon occasion, to show his reading, and garnish his conversation. Ned is indeed a true English reader, incapable of relishing the great and masterly strokes of this art; but wonderfully pleased with the little Gothic ornaments of epigrammatical conceits, turns, points, and quibbles, which are so frequent in the most admired of our English poets.

"'You must understand,' says Ned, 'that the sonnet I am going to to you was written upon a lady, who showed me some verses of her

own making, and is, perhaps, the best poet of our age. But you shall hear it.'

"Upon which he began to read as follows:

1.

"'When dressed in laurel wreaths you shine,
And tune your soft melodious notes,
You seem a sister of the Nine,
Or Phœbus' self in petticoats.

2.

"'I fancy, when your song you sing,
Your song you sing with so much art,
Your pen was plucked from Cupid's wing;
For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.'

"'Why,' says I, 'this is a little nosegay of conceits, a very lump of salt: every verse has something in it that piques; and then the dart in the last line is certainly as pretty a sting in the tail of an epigram, for so I think you critics call it, as ever entered into the thought of a poet.' 'Dear Mr. Bickerstaff,' says he, shaking me by the hand, 'everybody knows you to be a judge of these things; and, to tell you truly, I read over Roscommon's translation of Horace's *Art of Poetry* three several times before I sat down to write the sonnet which I have shown you. But you shall hear it again, and pray observe every line of it; for not one of them shall pass without your approbation.

"'When dressed in laurel wreaths you shine,'

"'That is,' says he, 'when you have your garland on; when you are writing verses.' To which I replied, 'I know your meaning: a metaphor!' 'The same,' said he, and went on.

"'And tune your soft melodious notes,'

"'Pray observe the gliding of that verse; there is scarse a consonant in it: I took care to make it run upon liquids. Give me your opinion of it.' 'Truly,' said I, 'I think it as good as the former.' 'I am very glad to hear you say so,' says he, 'but mind the next.

"'You seem a sister of the Nine,'

"'That is,' says he, 'you seem a sister of the Muses; for, if you look into ancient authors, you will find it was their opinion that there were nine of them.' 'I remember it very well,' said I; 'but pray proceed.'

"'Or Phœbus' self in petticoats.'

"'Phœbus,' says he, 'was the god of Poetry. These little instances, Mr. Bickerstaff, show a gentleman's reading. Then to take off from the air of learning, which Phœbus and the Muses had given to this first stanza, you may observe how it falls all of a sudden into the familiar; "in petticoats!"

"'Or Phœbus' self in petticoats.'"

"'Let us now,' says I, 'enter upon the second stanza; I find the first line is still a continuation of the metaphor.

"'I fancy, when your song you sing.'"

"'It is very right,' says he; 'but pray observe the turn of words in those two lines. I was a whole hour in adjusting of them, and have still

a doubt upon me whether in the second line it should be, "Your song you sing; or, You sing your song?" You shall hear them both:

"'I fancy, when your song you sing,
Your song you sing with so much art,'

or,

"'I fancy, when your song you sing,
You sing your song with so much art.'

"'Truly,' said I, 'the turn is so natural either way, that you have made me almost giddy with it.' 'Dear sir,' said he, grasping me by the hand, 'you have a great deal of patience; but pray what do you think of the next verse?

"'Your pen was plucked from Cupid's wing.'

"'Think!' says I, 'I think you have made Cupid look like a little goose.' 'That was my meaning,' says he: 'I think the ridicule is well enough hit off. But we come now to the last, which sums up the whole matter.

"'For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.'

"'Pray how do you like that *Ah!* doth it not make a pretty figure in that place? *Ah!*——it looks as if I felt the dart, and cried out at being pricked with it.

"'For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.'

"'My friend Dick Easy,' continued he, 'assured me he would rather have written that *Ah!* than to have been the author of the Æneid. He indeed objected, that I made Mira's pen like a quill in one of the lines, and like a dart in the other. But as to that——' 'Oh! as to that,' says I, 'it is but supposing Cupid to be like a porcupine, and his quills and darts will be the same thing.'"

With Steele, a man of unrestrained emotions, his prose is as gentle as his heart; and it is this sweetness of sympathy, which so endeared him to his contemporaries, that has kept his name alive. Steele probably wrote as he spoke, with natural and unrestrained outbursts. His style hardly lends itself to criticism, yet pleases all the more on that account. The pathos and the mirth that permeate everything he wrote restrain us from cavilling at his faults. Both these qualities were brought out to their full extent when he drew his studies of women and children, into whose natures he had the most delicate insight, and for whom he cherished the tenderest affection.

Steele's humour, therefore, unlike Addison's, was always genial, and never developed into irony. By being less elaborate, it was also less affected, and appealed directly to the emotions of the reader. Addison at his best was cold and calm by nature. His stately serenity, upon which Thackeray lays so much stress, was wanting entirely in his impulsive friend. Addison's mind raised him above the fluctuations of human affairs. Steele's pathos was the overflow of his kindly heart. There can be no greater contrast between two pieces of writing than can be

found in Addison's *Very Pretty Poet* and the following passage from Steele's *Memories of his Childhood*:

"The first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant, than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a beating the coffin, and calling papa; for, I know not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother catched me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embraces; and told me in a flood of tears, 'Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to us again.' She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport; which, methought, struck me with an instinct of sorrow, that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo; and receives impressions so forcible, that they are as hard to be removed by reason, as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application. Hence it is that good nature in me is no merit; but having been so frequently overwhelmed with her tears before I knew the cause of any affliction, or could draw defences from my own judgment, I imbibed commiseration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since insnared me into ten thousand calamities; and from whence I can reap no advantage, except it be, that, in such a humour as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the softnesses of humanity, and enjoy that sweet anxiety which arises from the memory of past afflictions."

66. The "Tatler" and the "Spectator."

Before the publication of the *Tatler*, English journalism had been at a low ebb. When newspapers were first started, Government regulations confined them to news from abroad, and comments upon home politics were strictly forbidden. The abolition of the Star Chamber in 1641 gave an opportunity for a flood of virulent matter to flow over the country, which had to be checked by a Licensing Act. This was passed six years later, and gave the Government a complete control of the press. The Act expired in 1679, and a fresh start was made, with better results. The *London Gazette* and the *Observator* were then first issued.

The successful ventures of Swift, Addison, and Steele have already been noticed in connection with the *Examiner*, the *Whig Examiner*, and finally Steele's *Tatler*. The great difference between the new papers and the older ones lay in the fact that the new ones rigidly excluded politics from all their columns. This gave the writers a freer hand, for they could base their articles upon a far wider range of subjects.

Steele's share in the *Spectator* consisted chiefly of essays on Humanity. Like Addison, he was genuinely earnest about religious questions and thoroughly practical in his writings. He did all that lay in his power to discountenance the practice of duelling, and in many of his papers spoke strongly against the contemptuous attitude of the day towards marriage. He was always the champion of women, declaring that their place in a refined society was that of honoured helpmeets to men. He especially warned them of the danger of their becoming men's rivals, and insisted that the womanliness of women should be most carefully preserved.

The first number of the new paper contained a description of the Spectator. This was really a study of Addison, written by himself. Steele contributed the second paper, speaking of the members of the club, and giving a graceful sketch of a type of country gentleman. This was not, as Macaulay supposed, "a stray phantom of Steele's imagination"; it never was intended as a representation of any one person, but of a class of persons, a point clearly shown by the different manner in which suggestions it contained were subsequently handled by Addison, Budgell, Tickell, and even by Steele himself.

Sir Roger de Coverley represented the country interests, and in the hands of Addison became an excellent portrait of a well-bred Englishman. Sir Andrew Freeport typified the shrewd monied interests of the City. The Templar talked from the point of view of a man of taste and cultivation; the clergyman from the doctrinal attitude of the theologian, and from practical knowledge of work among the poor. Captain Sentry represented the Service; and Will Honeycomb the world of Fashion.

Where so many characteristic types of Englishmen were shown, there was full opportunity for the painting of an accurate picture of the foibles and follies of human society. It was the great merit of Addison that he never let his satire or humour become vicious. All through the papers of the *Spectator* the influence of his moderation and kindly feeling can be seen. He was one of the first to realise that social life depends for its purity, and consequently its dignity, upon the respect of men and women for each other. In this he supported, if he did not surpass, the wise principles advocated by Steele. No papers in the *Spectator* are better than those in which this subject is treated in essays that cannot be surpassed for truth, pathos, and grace.

67. Defoe and "Robinson Crusoe."

Daniel Foe, the son of a butcher, was born in London about 1661. *Though* trained for the dissenting ministry, at the age

of four-and-twenty he went into a hosiery business on Cornhill. He took part in Monmouth's rebellion, and after Sedgmoor fled to France. He then seems to have passed over to Spain and Portugal as a trader; and when about to return to England prefixed a 'De' to his name, to prevent the officials from recognizing him as the Foe who had accompanied Monmouth. He went into business again; and in seven years owed seventeen thousand pounds, after which time little is known of him until 1695. Then he seems to have become an accountant in Government employ; and his natural taste for writing was developed by the production of numerous pamphlets. He was a man of strong intellect, but coarse and common in nature and instinct. One pamphlet, appearing in 1698, supported the policy of William the Third; and in the same year another, on *Occasional Conformity*, showed that he had modified his views with regard to dissent. He made no mark in literature until 1701, when his satire in verse, *The True-born Englishman*, caught the taste of the common people. Eighty thousand copies were sold in the streets of London. The death of William the Third injured his prospects, whereupon he wrote several inferior poems in welcome of Queen Anne.

In 1702 he became notorious from a pamphlet entitled *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. This was a satire upon the High Church Tory party, but its aim was mistaken; the satire was misunderstood; the Dissenters were scared; and the High Church party were delighted. When the truth came out, both sides desired that Defoe should be punished. He was therefore prosecuted, and stood for three days in the pillory, being afterwards imprisoned in Newgate. Harley set him free in 1704.

Upon his release, he seems to have taken a post as a paid official spy; but when Harley was dismissed from office, Defoe sold his services to Godolphin; and on Godolphin's defeat, returned promptly to Harley. The two leaders understood quite well what was the character of the man they thus employed; and, after the accession of George the First, Defoe's career in politics came abruptly to an end.

He began a different life after 1715; one far more desirable to contemplate than the experiences of his earlier days. In 1719, at the age of fifty-nine, he produced a book which has taken one of the most prominent positions of all English writings. This was the famous story of *Robinson Crusoe*. In respect of its particular qualities—the interest of the story, the vigour of its narrative, the wonderful realism and apparent truthfulness, the lucidity and attraction of the style—there are hardly any other tales in existence which can stand as its

equal. It is a book with no emotion and no feeling, and the religious element is unreal. It tells a fascinating tale, and tells that tale as none has ever been told before or since; it is one of those remarkable works that can be read with delight by both boys and adults, yet is lacking entirely in thought, pathos, and humour.

The success of *Robinson Crusoe* encouraged Defoe to continue his writings. In 1720 he published no less than three romances, of which the *Memoirs of a Cavalier* and the *Life of Captain Singleton*, are the best. The last named is a tale of pirate life in the Southern Seas, with excellent descriptions of tropical Africa. In 1722 appeared *Moll Flanders*, *The History of the Plague in London*, and *Colonel Jack*. The second of these books is written with such care and apparent attention to correctness of detail that it has been regarded as a real authority. In 1724 came *Roxana* and a *Tour through Great Britain*, the latter containing a mass of curious and interesting information with regard to the condition of England nearly two hundred years ago. Defoe had no appreciation of scenery or country life, and writes only from a commercial point of view; but there is much observation, presented with singular clearness.

The tales that he wrote during the last years of his life brought him in a considerable sum of money, and enabled him to live in comfort at Stoke Newington. He appears to have exceeded his income, for in 1729 he absconded, and died two years later at lodgings in Moorfields.

The total sum of Defoe's publications has been found to amount to two hundred and fifty-four distinct works. Of these, one alone remains which gives him a place in literature.

Robinson Crusoe has often been termed the first great English novel. It is not a novel at all in the real sense of that word, but a tale of adventure. It marks an important point in the history of English narrative prose, by its clear and distinct style, using ordinary words, but in their proper way. Swift, in his *Tale of a Tub* and Addison and Steele with the *Spectator* Essays had done work of a similar nature, though appealing more to cultivated minds. Defoe, catching the ear of the uneducated with his simple stories, showed them how, in the easiest way, clear and definite ideas could be expressed.

XVIII. ALEXANDER POPE.

68. The Life of Pope.

We pass from the period after the death of Milton, only redeemed by the writings of Dryden, to a new condition of affairs, among which a different literature arose. This was due

to many causes—some with good effects, others with harmful. The seventeenth century had been an unfortunate one for England. The enthusiasms of the Elizabethan age crumbled away, the old ideals were greatly shattered, and a discontent spread throughout the community. The Rebellion and Revolution were the result; and by the end of the century passion was almost exhausted. The discussion of abstract questions ceased, and smaller rivalries took their places.

The strife between Church and Dissent and the rivalry of two new political parties, Whigs and Tories, divided England into a number of sections, and brought about a party government and a party literature. Books were then written as weapons of warfare, increasing the vigour of their style, but injuring its nature. As a party literature, it devoted itself to town life. The country-side was held in contempt; the English affection for rustic surroundings was partially destroyed. Passions and emotions were sneered at; human nature was examined, and made the subject of comment. Each section of the community despised the others. Each said and wrote the sharpest things they could about the rest. Verse attained to clearness and vigorous expression; prose became terse and keen. Natural feeling was almost absent from both.

Alexander Pope, born in 1688, and leading an invalid life for fifty-six years, reflects in his work the tone of the century. His father was a linen-merchant in Cornhill and a Roman Catholic, which at that time involved proscription by law. It was therefore impossible for him to get his child any good school education.

He was undoubtedly born with a gift for the writing of verse. An *Ode* was produced when he was twelve, and some *Pastorals* at sixteen. Before these he had composed, and burnt, a comedy, a tragedy, and an epic. In his twenty-third year he created a sensation with his *Essay on Criticism*, and the first version of the *Rape of the Lock* appeared shortly afterwards.

Pope received much assistance from the kindness of his friends. In the years of early manhood he was intimate with William Walsh, then regarded as the best of living critics. Dryden held Walsh in great estimation, and Pope received from him much counsel and help. Sir William Trumbull, a former Secretary of State, was also much attracted by Pope, and until his death remained one of the lad's best friends. It was Sir William who suggested the translation of the *Iliad*, and five years later, when the work was completed and producing a sensation, Swift came forward and gave Pope much support. Swift had known the younger man soon after the appearance of the *Rape of the Lock*, and on the success of the *Iliad* he intro-

duced Pope to many of the great men of the day, among them Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke; Bishop Atterbury, and Harley.

The money paid for his book enabled Pope to buy the house at Twickenham, which he made famous, and where he lived for many years. In this retreat he continued steadfastly with his work, avoiding London life to a great extent, since he had been annoyed there by the comments of his critics. Pope was engaged to edit a Shakspere, and his six volumes appeared in 1725. He was unfitted for such work; and had very little knowledge of Elizabethan literature. Lewis Theobald, a man with a gift of writing for the stage, knew a great deal more about Shakspere than did Pope. His pamphlet, *Shakspere Restored or Specimens of Blunders committed or unamended in Pope's Edition of this Poet*, appeared in 1726. Pope was so wroth at Theobald's perfectly just remarks that in his own satirical poem of the *Dunciad* he conferred upon Theobald the title of King of the Dunces. The *Dunciad* was published in 1728, the most savage of all Pope's satires. In its production and preparation he had been largely influenced by his friendship with Swift.

The next phase of Pope's life was that over which Lord Bolingbroke exercised great power, the result being the *Essay on Man*, the *Imitations of Horace*, and the *Moral Essays*. These belong to the years 1733 to 1738, and the last of his famous friends was Bishop Warburton, himself an editor of Shakspere.

Warburton, of his own accord, had answered an attack made upon Pope by a Swiss professor, who declared the principles expressed in the *Essay on Man* were nothing more than the theories of Natural Religion. This kindly office led to the beginning of an intimacy between Pope and Warburton, who became Pope's last great friend.

Pope died in 1744, and Bolingbroke testified his affection for him by saying, "I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends or more general friendship for mankind." It has been acutely but truly said that "the history of Pope's writings is the history of his quarrels." It is better to think of him as a man who bore a life of pain with fortitude. In his private life Pope was far more agreeable than in his literary career. To his mother he was devoted. When making an income of eight hundred pounds a year from his books, he systematically gave away a hundred in charities.

69. The Poems of Pope.

The *Pastorals* which Pope said he had written at the age of sixteen did not appear in print until 1709, when he was

twenty-one. They attracted attention, but cannot be regarded as genuine rural poetry. They were cast in the form of four Eclogues on the *Seasons*, and were supposed to be after the manner of Virgil. The following stanzas are typical of the whole poem. Two swains, Strephon and Daphnis, are disputing as to the respective charms of their sweethearts.

Strephon—

"All nature mourns, the skies relent in showers,
Hushed are the birds, and closed the drooping flowers;
If Delia smile, the flowers begin to spring,
The skies to brighten, and the birds to sing.

Daphnis—

"All nature laughs, the groves are fresh and fair,
The sun's mild lustre warms the vital air;
If Sylvia smiles, new glories gild the shore,
And vanquished nature seems to charm once more.

Strephon—

"In spring the fields, in autumn hills I love,
At morn the plains, at noon the shady grove,
But Delia always; absent from her sight,
Nor plains at morn, nor groves at noon delight.

Daphnis—

"Sylvia's like autumn ripe, yet mild as May,
More bright than noon, yet fresh as early day;
Even spring displeases, when she shines not here;
But blest with her, 'tis spring throughout the year."

In 1709 Pope wrote his *Essay on Criticism*, and published it two years later. In this poem, a considerable advance upon the *Pastorals*, Pope showed his admiration for Boileau the French poet, whose famous *Art of Poetry* (*L'Art Poétique*) had appeared in 1673. Boileau, in his turn, had modelled himself upon the *Ars Poetica* of Horace. Although Pope admittedly used Boileau as his master, the Essay had a power of its own, and was clearly the work of a new and a fresh mind. He follows Boileau in setting up the Latin poets of the Augustan age as models of style and careful workmanship, but goes further by contending that nature must be "at once the source, the end, and test of art." The argument of the poem may be briefly summed up by saying that it shows first how taste should be founded, how far the writer's own judgment may be used, and in what cases nature may be called in to modify it. The history of criticism is dealt with, and the poem concludes with comments upon the most celebrated of the critics. Pope finished with an affectionate address to the memory of William Walsh, who had died in 1708.

Pope speaks of him as

> "the muse's judge and friend,
> Who justly knew to blame or to commend;
> To failings mild, but zealous for desert:
> The clearest head, and the sincerest heart.
> This humble praise, lamented shade! receive,
> This praise at least a grateful muse may give:
> The muse whose early youth you taught to sing,
> Prescribed her heights, and pruned her tender wing,
> (Her guide now lost) no more attempts to rise,
> But in low numbers short excursions tries;
> Content if hence the unlearned their wants may view,
> The learned reflect on what before they knew:
> Careless of censure, nor too fond of fame;
> Still pleased to praise, yet not afraid to blame,
> Averse alike to flatter or offend;
> Not free from faults, nor yet too vain to mend."
>
> Desert, merit, value.

The Essay must be regarded as a remarkable production for so youthful a writer.

Windsor Forest followed instantly upon the *Essay on Criticism*; though smooth and careful, its value is little when compared with that of its predecessor. Pope never thoroughly realised the charm and meaning of the country; the appreciation of rural life did not enter into his nature. He was much more capable of dealing with his next subject, a piece of satirical verse. A quarrel was going on in the fashionable world between the families of Lord Petre and Miss Arabella Fermor. The young gentleman at a card party took the liberty of cutting off one of Miss Fermor's most beautiful locks of hair. This impertinence so irritated Miss Fermor that a quarrel broke out between the two families. The matter had became a really serious affair when it was suggested to Pope that a playful set of verses might possibly restore peace. Pope was delighted with the idea, and wrote the *Rape of the Lock*, a pretty little satire on the vanities of the great world. The poem at first had a good effect, and Miss Fermor even consented to its publication. It appeared in Lintot's *Miscellany*, and became the talk of the town. Miss Fermor objected to this more than to her loss, and she was still more annoyed when she heard of Pope's intention to re-write and expand the poem, and to publish it in a far larger form. Addison had given Pope some sensible advice in the matter when he told him on no account either to touch the original, and certainly not to republish it. Addison had written of the shorter version and described it as *merum sal*, the purest of wit. Pope, who at the time was not on the best of terms with Addison, believed him to be actuated merely by jealousy.

As far back as 1720 Swift had recommended Pope to write a general satire, and Pope, liking the idea, sketched out a *Progress of Dulness*. The matter lay in abeyance for six years, until Pope issued his Shakspere and the quarrel with Theobald began. Pope immediately selected Theobald to fill the central position in his satire, and in the first book Theobald was chosen by the Goddess of Dulness to succeed Elkanah Settle, whom Dryden had lampooned. It was to be one of the functions of Theobald to follow in Settle's footsteps, and to convey the diversions of the Smithfield rabble into the civilised west. The second book gave an account of the games in which critics, booksellers, and poets contended in honour of their new king.

The third book showed Theobald sleeping on the lap of Dulness, and in a vision carried over to the banks of Lethe. Here Settle's ghost discoursed to him of the glories of Dulness, past and present, and promised a triumph in the future to Dulness' empire. The gross personalities with which this poem was filled excited a wonderful interest in London, and were a great source of amusement to those whose reputations were not attacked. On the other hand, those who did suffer from its impudence were infuriated, and battles of wit and sharp retort ensued. In 1730 a *Grub Street Journal* appeared, issued weekly for seven years, in which the supporters of Pope, concealed under the name of *Knights of the Bathos*, pretended to attack Pope, but made a laughing-stock of his adversaries. The fault of the *Dunciad* was that Pope included among his dunces many men of ability, because in some way or another they had displeased him. A genius like Dryden and a scholar like Bentley were held up by Pope to the same ridicule that he meted out to the dullest of clowns. He showed to what extremes his personal feelings were allowed to carry him, when in 1743, with a final complete edition, he deposed Theobald, and substituted Colley Cibber. Cibber, a man then of over seventy years of age, had galled Pope by his hostility to the Roman Catholic Church. Cibber had never quite realised this, but believed that Pope had been annoyed by the reference made to him in the burlesque of the *Rehearsal*.

Pope next published the first part of his *Essay on Man*, two epistles dedicated to Bolingbroke. The book was anonymous, and for a long time no one, not even Swift, believed that the work was done by Pope. There were in the epistles signs of riper years, and rebukes against the unbelief spreading in France, which seemed as if they could hardly have been written by Pope. He was more interested in the movements of the time than his friends realised.

In 1733 Pope issued his third epistle of the *Essay on Man* and the first of his *Moral Essays, the Characters of Men*. In

1734 came the fourth epistle of the *Essay on Man*; in 1735 the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, in which Pope defended himself, and the second of the *Moral Essays, the Characters of Women.*

The four epistles which formed the *Essay on Man* are the most effective portion of this work. The main thought of this essay depended upon its defence of the goodness of God in His capacity of the Father of mankind.

At Rotterdam, in 1697, a *Historical and Critical Dictionary* had been published, which propounded a number of difficult theological problems. These points were answered by Leibnitz, a scientific and philosophic scholar, who wrote in French his *Théodicée*, a vindication of the justice of God in permitting natural or moral evil. In the *Essay on Man*, Pope followed Leibnitz, arguing that man being only a part of the universe which he cannot understand until he sees the whole plan of creation, can do nothing but have faith; that in apparent discord harmony exists, and that partial evil tends towards perfect good. His fourth epistle placed the source of happiness in virtue, the love of God, love of man, and sympathies of life. It was in this effort to keep down the coarse scepticism of the eighteenth century that Pope won respect and admiration. In modern times his philosophy has been sneered at, and his arrangement of it in the poem condemned. The closing lines of the fourth epistle were addressed to Bolingbroke.

Address to Bolingbroke.

"And while the muse now stoops, or now ascends,
To man's low passions, or their glorious ends,
Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,
To fall with dignity, with temper rise;
Formed by thy converse, happily to steer
From grave to gay, from lively to severe;
Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
Intent to reason, or polite to please.
Oh! while along the stream of time thy name
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame;
Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph and partake the gale?
When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
Shall then this verse to future age pretend
Thou wert my guide, philosopher and friend?
That, urged by thee, I turned the tuneful art
From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;
For wit's false mirror held up nature's light;
Shewed erring pride *Whatever is, is right*;
That reason, passion, answer one great aim;
That true self-love and social are the same;
That virtue only makes our bliss below;
And all our knowledge is *Ourselves to know.*"

The *Moral Essays* and the *Imitations from Horace* furnish themes not so liable to discussion. They show Pope at his best as a satirist; but they are wanting in strength of argument, and the first of them, on the *Characters of Men*, had to be entirely rearranged by Warburton. It is the weakest of the four; still it contains passages which could only have been produced by Pope. The subject of the second essay was badly chosen. In women, with perhaps one exception, Pope hardly saw anything except their faults. There is an objectionable allusion in the essay to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and coarse satire in the portrait of Atossa, the Duchess of Marlborough. Over the third essay, again largely altered by Warburton, Pope took great pains. Among many vigorous passages, the most notorious is the scene of the Duke of Buckingham's deathbed.

The *Imitations from Horace*, prefaced by an *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, are even more notorious for the vigour of their satire. Some of Pope's most famous dissections of character are to be found in the epistle—the attack upon Addison under the name of Atticus, the description of Lord Hervey as Sporus, and of the Duke of Marlborough as Bestia.

Atticus (Joseph Addison).

". . . But were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View with him scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, accent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to blame, or to commend,
A timorous foe and a suspicious friend;
Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and Templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep if Atticus were he?"

Pope was never in any sense a poet of the emotions. He can better be called a poet of the understanding. The one metrical form which he could control was the heroic couplet; his mastery was only over the verse belonging to his age. The

life that he saw was the one that he depicted. He was clever at reading the characters of men, and could analyse their natures, and describe them with accuracy. He was essentially a production of his time, and was touched by its limitations.

To account for the leading features of Pope's poetical work, reference must be briefly made to the effect produced by the theories of the French poet, Boileau. At the age of twenty-four Boileau had shown his skill as a literary critic; and his fame reached its height in 1673, when his *L'Art Poetique* exercised an influence over both French and English literature. He asserted that the great writers of Greece and Rome were as much the best examples of good style as Latin was the standard of correct speech. This theory led to a contempt for carelessness of style, and for trivial thought; and a group of writers and critics arose in England, who tested everything by Latin forms, forgetting that, while the language of France was of Latin origin, their own language was essentially Teutonic. The theory, however, lasted for nearly the whole of the eighteenth century; and not only explains the saying that the influence of Boileau upon Pope was greater than the influence of Dryden, but accounts for the style of the verse writers after Pope, until the beginning of another period about 1790.

70. Verse Writers of the first half of the Century: Parnell, Sir Samuel Garth, Lady Winchelsea, Prior, Gay, Matthew Green, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Johnson, Savage, Blair, Young, Thomson.

Before Pope's death, a transitional period had begun, which virtually lasted until about 1775 or 1780. In it, while the tastes and methods of bygone days were not entirely exhausted, the new feelings began to appear, and daily grew stronger. These different influences, however, did not conflict with one another; there was rather a tendency for them to mingle; and it is on account of this that the name of Transition has been given to the time.

While the period lasted, the satirists and writers of didactic poems still lingered. Traces of satire are to be seen in such writers as Johnson, Savage, and Churchill, who all have to be included in the group with which we are about to deal. We shall come across some who were touched by both divisions of the period, and others who write after the manner of one division only, and not of the other. There was, for instance, a graceful writer in Lady Winchelsea, who unconsciously represented the romantic feeling, developed at the end of the century; yet her death occurred twenty-four years before that

of Pope. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, on the other hand, at one time a great friend of Pope, and surviving him by eighteen years, was, by her satirical verse, linked closely to him; while her letters and private writings had an exactly opposite effect. Young, who lived until 1765, produced no good work after the death of Pope; and his writing, to the end, was touched more by the didactic spirit than by the romantic. The first name to consider is that of Thomas Parnell, who was born in Dublin; and taking priest's orders in 1700, became Archdeacon of Clogher in 1705. He was intimate with the wits of Queen Anne's time, especially with Swift, and died in his thirty-eighth year. The shortness of his life prevented him from leaving much work behind; but the feeling of his time is illustrated by the fact that *The Hermit*, for long considered his best poem, was written under the direct influence of Pope.

Pope had found Parnell leading a hermit's life in a remote Irish vicarage; and Swift, hearing from Pope of Parnell, took steps for getting him up to London, and presenting him to Harley.

The Hermit, a version of an old moral tale, was an effective poem, in melodious and flowing heroic verse. The story was well told, the *dénouement* carefully prepared, and at the end related with great effect.

Parnell, towards the close of his life, showed how he was touched by the newer feeling that was beginning to make itself felt. Two Odes, the *Hymn to Contentment* and the *Night-piece to Death*, are now regarded with more favour than they obtained at the time of their production. In the *Hymn*, a Miltonic effect was brought about by the alternate use of iambics and trochaics, which stood out as a reproach against the constant employment of the heroic couplet. *The Night-piece* showed a genuine love for nature, beautiful in expression, and giving evidence that Parnell wrote of scenes he had actually known. With it, he proved that he had put away the influence of Pope; for it distinctly took a place between Milton in the past, and Gray and Collins in the future.

A Night-piece on Death.

" By the blue taper's trembling light,
No more I waste the wakeful night,
Intent with endless view to pore
The schoolmen and the sages o'er:
Their books from wisdom widely stray,
Or point at best the longest way.
I'll seek a readier path, and go
Where wisdom's surely taught below. . . .

"Those graves, with bending osier bound,
That nameless heave the crumbled ground
Quick to the glancing thought disclose,
Where toil and poverty repose. . . .

"Ha! while I gaze, pale Cynthia fades,
The bursting earth unveils the shades!
All slow, and wan, and wrapped with shrouds,
They rise in visionary crowds,
And all with sober accent cry,
'Think, mortal, what it is to die.'"

Cynthia, a surname of Diana (Luna, the moon); given her from Mount Cynthus, the place of her birth.

A different attitude was adopted by Sir Samuel Garth, a sturdy Whig, and a well-known physician. At the end of the seventeenth century, he had been called up from Cambridge to London to take charge of a new dispensary, where the College of Physicians helped the poor without any demand for payment. The apothecaries complained loudly of this infringement of what seemed to them to be their rights, so Garth produced a mock-heroic set of verses, called *The Dispensary*, in which his enemies were held up to contempt. Garth is as much remembered for the sake of his metrical work, as for his forming a link between the methods of Dryden and Pope. Dryden and Garth being intimate friends, Garth's verse naturally modelled itself on Dryden's, while at the same time, it showed distinct traces of Pope. Making use of two influences—the vigour of the elder poet, and the finish of the younger—it did much to further the polish of heroic verse.

Garth, speaking of his poem, admitted that its basis had been suggested to him by Boileau's *Le Lutrin*, the music-desk; and perhaps did not realise how much Pope had drawn upon the same source.

A poetess of perhaps more importance than Garth, was the Countess of Winchelsea. She was a lady of considerable parts, a friend of Pope, and depicted by him as Ardelia. She developed a taste for dealing with country life and rustic scenes, which was entirely foreign to the feeling of the times she lived in. She was a forerunner of the romantic movement; an inevitable break-away from the artificial life of the eighteenth century. Hence Lady Winchelsea's *Nocturnal Reverie*, in spite of its pompous title, did a great deal to clear the way for the new poetry which was so speedily coming. Wordsworth, in the *Essay* which prefaced his *Lyrical Ballads*, spoke of the *Reverie* in very high terms. Lady Winchelsea obviously dealt with recollections of that which she herself had seen, and never wrote verses of

mechanical description, after the manner of Pope's *Windsor Forest.*

Matthew Prior, born in 1644, of a family of poor gentlefolk, was educated at Westminster. His father died just as Matthew had completed his school career, and left him no means of getting to the University. He was accordingly handed over to the care of an uncle, who had become a successful innkeeper, and was then landlord of the Rummer Tavern, near Charing Cross. This house was frequented by nobility and gentry, who knew the history of the landlord's misfortunes. The Earl of Dorset, coming into the tavern, found Matthew amusing himself by reading Horace. He talked to the boy, and, struck with his cleverness, sent him to St. John's College, Cambridge. Matthew took his B.A. degree in 1686, and then, returning to London, got known by a bright and clever parody on Dryden's *Hind and Panther*, called *The Country and the City Mouse.*

The Earl of Dorset did not forget his young friend, and, through his influence, Prior became a Secretary of Embassy. He rose afterwards to be a Secretary of State, a Commissioner of Trade and Plantations, a Member of Parliament, and finally, an Ambassador. He published a volume of poems in 1707, enlarged into a splendid folio in 1718.

In the course of his career, he was Secretary to the Embassy at the Hague Congress, opened by William the Third in 1691. After the Conference, Louis the Fourteenth took Mons, and, in the following year, Namur. Boileau then celebrated the glory of Louis in a *Pindaric Ode*, to which Prior replied with a burlesque of the ode when William retook Namur in 1695.

Prior was again Secretary of the Embassy at the negotiations for the Peace of Ryswick, 1697, and was confidentially employed in all the negotiations between England and France, until the breaking out of the War of the Spanish Succession. On events proving disastrous to Marlborough, the Whigs, and the war party, Prior left them, and conducted, for the Tory side, a newspaper called the *Examiner.* He was employed by the Tories to secretly negotiate a peace with Louis the Fourteenth in 1711, and for this, when the Whigs came into power, was imprisoned, and thought he would lose his head. He remained in captivity for two years (1715 to 1717), occupying himself with a long poem called *Alma*, on the relations of the soul and body, written, of all metres, in Hudibrastic verse. On his release from prison, the folio edition of his poems was issued, by which he made four thousand pounds. In 1721 he died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

His playful humour comes out in the verses on the inferior poets of his day. They are written as *A Simile*:

"Dear Thomas, did'st thou never pop
Thy head into a tin-man's shop?
There, Thomas, did'st thou never see
('Tis but by way of simile!)
A squirrel spend his little rage,
In jumping round a rolling cage?
The cage, as either side turned up,
Striking a ring of bells a-top?
Moved in the orb, pleased with the chimes,
The foolish creature thinks he climbs:
But here or there, turn wood or wire,
He never gets two inches higher.
So fares it with those merry blades,
That frisk it under Pindus' shades,
In noble songs, and lofty odes,
They tread on stars, and talk with Gods;
Still dancing in an airy round,
Still pleased with their own verses' sound;
Brought back, how fast so e'er they go,
Always aspiring, always low."

Pindus. A chain of mountains in Greece, sacred to the muses.

In an epigram, he can use a deadlier weapon:

"To John I owed an obligation;
But John unhappily thought fit
To publish it to all the nation:
Sure John and I are more than quit."

John Gay, a Devonshire man, born in 1688, began as a silk-mercer, but disliked his business and desired to follow literature. In 1712 he became secretary to the Duchess of Monmouth, and in the following year published his first poems, *Rural Sports*, a Georgic, which he dedicated to Pope. Pope, at this time, was jealous of the success of Ambrose Philip's pastoral verses. He made Gay's acquaintance, and besought him to write a pastoral which should outdo the production of his enemy. Gay agreed to Pope's suggestion, but he was too good-natured to make a vicious burlesque of any other person's work. His *Shepherd's Week* proved to be the writing of a man who really knew rural life, and was a by no means despicable poem. There were pretty pictures in it, very true to life, of the ordinary amusements and occupations of the English peasant. The country-girl burns nuts to find who is her lover, or gives a knife with a posy on it to a sweetheart eventually untrue. This is the cry of her distress:

"Ah, Colin! canst thou leave thy sweetheart true?
What I have done for thee will Cic'ly do?
Will she thy linen wash, or hosen darn,
And knit thee gloves made of her own-spun yarn?

Will she with hus-wife's hand provide thy meat,
And every Sunday morn thy neckcloth plait?
Which o'er thy kersey doublet spreading wide,
In service time drew Cic'ly's eyes aside. . . .
In harvest, when the sun was mounted high,
My leathern bottle did thy drought supply;
Whene'er you mowed I followed with the rake,
And have been oft full sun-burnt for thy sake;
When in the welkin gathering showers were seen,
I lagged the last with Colin on the green;
And when at eve returning with thy car,
Awaiting heard thy jingling bells from far;
Straight on the fire the sooty pot I placed,
To warm thy broth I burnt my hands for haste."

The *Shepherd's Week* was followed by *Trivia*, a poem dealing with quite a different subject, and giving a bright description of a walk through the streets of London. Swift supplied Gay with many hints for this poem, and, between them, the result was genuinely humorous. Towards the end of Queen Anne's reign, in 1714, Gay went over to Hanover, as secretary to the Earl of Clarendon, but the death of the Queen brought the Whigs into office, and Gay lost his appointment. For the next ten years he went through great poverty, relieved to a considerable extent by the kindness of Pope. In 1727 his *Fables* were published, which met with a great success; and in 1728 the *Beggar's Opera* came out at Drury Lane, which was thought to have been written with political intent, in order to portray Walpole in the character of a romantic highwayman. For this opera, with its hero, Macheath, and its rival heroines, Polly and Lucy, Gay received eight hundred pounds. The play was followed by a sequel, called *Polly*, which was also looked upon as political, and was consequently forbidden. A great demand then arose for printed copies, which brought to Gay some twelve hundred pounds.

Gay's other works were the *Epistles*, *Town Eclogues*, *Tales*, and *Miscellaneous Pieces*. Of these the *Epistles* were the best. One of them, *A Welcome from Greece*, in other words, an ode of congratulation to Pope for having finished the translation of the *Iliad*, has a special vivacity, and an easy eight-lined stanza. The three given here mention the fine ladies who are supposed to welcome Pope as he lands from his imaginary voyage.

"Oh, what a concourse swarms on yonder quay!
The sky re-echoes with new shouts of joy;
By all this show, I ween 'tis Lord Mayor's day!
I hear the voice of trumpet and hautboy—
No, now I see them near—Oh, these are they
Who come in crowds to welcome thee from Troy.
Hail to the bard, whom long as lost we mourned,
From siege, from battle, and from storm returned!

"What lady's that to whom he gently bends?
Who knows not her? Ah, those are Wortley's eyes:
How art thou honoured, numbered with her friends!
For she distinguishes the good and wise.
The sweet-tongued Murray near her side attends;
Now to my heart the glance of Howard flies;
Now Hervey, fair of face, I mark full well,
With thee, Youth's youngest daughter, sweet Lepell.

"I see two lovely sisters hand in hand,
The fair-haired Martha and Theresa brown;
Madge Bellenden, the tallest of the land;
And smiling Mary, soft and fair as down.
Yonder I see the cheerful Duchess stand,
For friendship, zeal, and blithesome humours known;
Whence that loud shout in such a hearty strain?
Why, all the Hamiltons are in her train!"

Wortley's eyes, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in her younger days one of the most beautiful women in England.

Murray, William Murray, a younger son of Lord Stormont, an eminent lawyer, eventually Lord Chief Justice, and an Earl. Famous for his conversational powers.

Howard, Mrs. Howard, at this time a widow, afterwards Countess of Suffolk.

Hervey, John, Lord Hervey, succeeded to the peerage on the death of his brother in 1723. He supported Walpole for many years, and held the appointment of Lord Privy Seal. His *Memoirs*, of the reign of George II., were not published till a hundred years after his death. They form a most valuable addition to the history of their time. Hervey was a brilliant conversationalist; and a great friend and admirer of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

Martha and Theresa, daughters of Mr. Lister Blount, head of an old Roman Catholic family, Blount of Mapledurham.

Madge and Mary Bellenden, daughters of another country gentleman. These four young ladies were celebrated belles.

The cheerful Duchess, The Duchess of Queensberry, Gay's kindest friend.

The Hamiltons, the famous family of Douglas, the Dukes of Hamilton.

Gay's kind friends, the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, gave him a home for the closing years of his life. The Duke had very wisely taken care of the money that Gay received by the sale of copies of the forbidden opera, and when he died, in 1732, there were six thousand pounds secured to be left to his sisters.

Matthew Green, forgotten for many years, passed all his life as a clerk in the Customs, and left a poem of about eight hundred lines, entitled *The Spleen*. The friend for whom it was written published it upon Green's death in 1737, and it has been a source of regret that Green did not write much more.

He wrote in a metre of eight-syllabled lines, which had been

employed in the seventeenth century for lyrical and pastoral pieces. Butler had used it in *Hudibras*, and Swift in other satires, though Green was not touched by their influence at all, and a strong personal feeling marked his verse. He speaks to his friends of the delights of the country:

> "Here stillness, height, and solemn shade
> Invite, and contemplation aid;
> Here nymphs from hollow oaks relate
> The dark decrees and will of fate,
> And dreams beneath the spreading beech
> Inspire, and docile fancy teach;
> While soft as breezy breath of wind,
> Impulses rustle through the mind;
> Here Dryads, scorning Phoebus' ray,
> While Pan melodious pipes away,
> In measur'd motions frisk about,
> Till old Silenus puts them out:
> There see the clover, pea, and bean
> Vie in variety of green;
> Fresh pastures speckl'd o'er with sheep;
> Brown fields their fallow sabbaths keep;
> Plump Ceres golden tresses wear,
> And poppy-topknots deck her hair;
> And silver streams through meadows stray
> And Naiads on the margin play,
> And lesser nymphs on side of hills
> From plaything urns pour down the rills."

Dryads, nymphs that presided over the woods.
Silenus, a demi-god, the preceptor and attendant of Bacchus. He had great knowledge of the formation of the world, and the nature of things.
Naiads, Deities presiding over springs, rivers, wells, and fountains.

A distinguished figure in English society at this time was the Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, daughter of the Duke of Kingston. She was born at Thoresby, in Nottinghamshire, about 1690, and her mother died when Lady Mary was only four years old. Her bringing up was then superintended by her father; and the duke, recognising his little daughter's capacity, had her given a good classical training when she reached girlhood. She was taught the elements of Greek, Latin, and French, and Bishop Burnet undertook the completion of her education.

When she was grown up, Lady Mary saw a great deal of the wife of the Honourable Sidney Montagu, second son to the Earl of Sandwich, who was very kind to the motherless girl. This led to an intimate friendship springing up between Lady Mary and Mrs. Montagu's son, and their marriage took place in 1712. Her lover, Edward Wortley Montagu, a prominent member of Parliament, and a friend of Addison and Steele, proved a tender

and most congenial husband. When he received his appointment as Commissioner of the Treasury in 1714, Lady Mary made her *début* at George the First's Court, and quickly took her place in the great world. A different interest in her life at the same time centred to a great extent round her acquaintance with Pope. He became one of the most enthusiastic of her admirers, not only for her beauty and fascinating manners, but on account of her abilities. Two years later, the Embassy at the Porte fell vacant, and Edward Wortley was appointed to the post. In the month of August, the young couple made an arduous journey across Europe to Constantinople, Lady Mary being among the first of English women who visited the Levant.

While she was on her journey, and during her residence at the capital, she kept up a regular correspondence with her sister, the Countess of Mar, with two ladies of the court, and with Pope. Her life at Constantinople was not only happy, but interesting; for the cultivation of her early days enabled her to realise the associations of Constantinople before the Turkish occupation. Her capacity for languages, which had shown itself in her girlhood, had opportunities for being well exercised in several strange tongues. German, Italian, and Turkish were all added to her learning; and Turkish she acquired so well, as to be able to translate its poetry. The most remarkable occurrence in her life at Constantinople was the making of an experiment in vaccination. She applied it, and with success, to her little son, who was then about three years old; and won fame in England, on her return, for encouraging its use, and by getting it sanctioned by the College of Physicians.

Edward Wortley's work as an ambassador was concluded in 1717, and his letter of recall, countersigned by his friend Addison, who was then Secretary of State, told him of the satisfaction that his work had given to all the royalties concerned. Soon after their return to England, the Wortleys were pressed by Pope to make their summer residence near to his villa at Twickenham. To this they consented, but the effusive friendship which Pope had displayed in his letters to Lady Mary at Constantinople faded rapidly away, and ended in a downright quarrel.

On the accession of George the Second, the Countess of Bristol and her son, Lord Hervey, had become great favourites of the queen. Lady Mary's political views were also consonant with those of Sir Robert Walpole, and she formed a large acquaintance with all the court party of the day. Pope became very jealous of Lady Mary's friendship with the Herveys, and an open rupture broke out between them, which was never healed.

Pope behaved with malignant discourtesy, proving dangerous only to himself.

The Lord Hervey whom Pope so hated was Lord Privy Seal to King George the Second, and had made a name for himself in Parliament. He was a man of considerable ability and good qualities. Pope, jealous of Lord Hervey for having become a favourite with Lady Mary, used his virulent pen to describe him under the name of a notorious scoundrel, Sporus, a favourite of the Emperor Nero.

Pope, in his satire, relates how he and his friend were conversing together, and how Hervey's pseudonym was mentioned:

Pope. " 'Let Sporus tremble'—
Arbuthnot. 'What! That thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of asses milk?
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?'
Pope. 'Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
Or as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
In puns, in politics, in tales, or lies,
Or spite, or filth, or rhymes, or blasphemies. . . .
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,
Now trips a Lady, and now struts a Lord.'"

Asses milk. Hervey all his life suffered from miserable health, and lived chiefly on milk.

Lady Mary had a great correspondence with many famous people.

Lord Hervey's letters to her were bright and lively, and those from the Duchess of Marlborough, wife of the great Duke, were even more amusing, and adorned with various quaint spellings. Some of the most interesting letters that Lady Mary received were those from literary men other than Pope. Dr. Edward Young, writer of the poem *Night Thoughts*, in one of his notes, thanks her particularly for her donation to the subscription which was being raised to assist Richard Savage. Others of his letters thank Lady Mary for her criticisms of his plays, for the Doctor was a dramatist as well as a poet. The greatest novelist in English literature stood a great deal nearer to Lady Mary than any of the other writers. Henry Fielding, her cousin,

dedicated to her his first comedy of *Love in Several Masks*; and, when he became more practised, his drama of *The Modern Husband*, which made a success at Drury Lane Theatre in 1731.

In 1739 Lady Mary's health broke down, and, going over to Italy, she lived there for two-and-twenty years. At the solicitation of her daughter, the Countess of Bute, she then returned to England, where the climate instantly affected her; and she died in 1762.

Lady Mary was ready with her pen, though her best work was nearly all given to her *Letters*. Many of these were written during her sojourn at Constantinople, while others were vivid descriptions of the Court and manners of England as they were during her life in town. The best of the *Letters* were those written from Italy to Lady Bute, containing admirable sketches of the Italian people and able criticisms of contemporary English authors. Through all the long years of her stay, Lady Mary, by her correspondence, kept in touch with the life at home.

Lady Mary was gifted with a power of skilful satirical verse, though she did not practice it much in her later days; but when, in 1716, her *Town Eclogues* were published, written in heroic verse and bright with wit, she was recognised as being, even at that early age, the most brilliant woman in England.

She became especially distinguished for a wide knowledge of her fellow creatures, guided by a keen insight, and softened by a thorough womanliness of feeling. This was brought about by her natural sense of humour, and its necessary complement of pathos.

Samuel Johnson, on two occasions, claimed with his poems a place in the Didactic School. *London*, published in his twenty-ninth year, and composed during the struggle of his early experiences in the great city, was an imitation of Juvenal. It attracted so much attention that a second edition was called for in a week. At just the same time Pope's satirical dialogue appeared, with the name of the year as its title, but Johnson's verses far eclipsed Pope's. Thales, the speaker of the poem, is supposed to represent Savage, the friend of Johnson during their hardships in London. He gives his reasons for wishing to leave the metropolis:

> "By numbers here from shame or censure free,
> All crimes are safe but hated poverty.
> This, only this, the rigid law pursues,
> This, only this, provokes the snarling Muse.
> The sober trader, at a tatter'd cloak,
> Wakes from his dream, and labours at a joke;
> With brisker air, the silken courtiers gaze,
> And turn the varied taunt a thousand ways.

Of all the griefs that harass the distressed,
Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest;
Fate never wounds more deep the generous heart
Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart.
Has heaven reserv'd, in pity to the poor,
No pathless waste or undiscovered shore?
No secret island in the boundless main?
No peaceful desert yet unclaimed by Spain?
Quick, let us rise, the happy seats explore,
And bear oppression's insolence no more.
This mournful truth is everywhere confessed,
Slow rises worth, by poverty depressed,
But here more slow, where all are slaves to gold,
Where looks are merchandise, and smiles are sold,
Where, won by bribes, by flatteries implored,
The groom retails the favours of his lord."

Johnson was so carried away with emotion at the thoughts of his own sorrow and poverty that he caused the line, "Slow rises worth," to be printed in capital letters. Ten years later, Fortune having been kinder to him, he was able to live with more comfort. He wrote a tragedy, which he trusted might succeed, and produced *The Vanity of Human Wishes* with the desire of exciting some interest for himself, when its readers should learn that he was the author of the coming play. The poem is in the same heroic verse as *London*, though written in quite a different method. His own distress, and the want which had driven so many thousand people to misery and shame, rendered his *London* excited and emotional. In the later poem he is grave and serious, and stands aside examining human nature, rather than seeming to share in it himself. His verse is sonorous and tragic, and, after the manner of Pope, he expresses his thoughts in the fewest but the best words. The theme of the poem was based on studies of great men who have failed by their rashness in attempting to go beyond their capacities. In Charles the Twelfth of Sweden he finds one of his most effective examples, and the ending of his poem is grand in its magnificence.

The *Prologue* spoken at the opening of Drury Lane is not, however, so familiar as *The Vanity of Human Wishes*. The following lines show its resounding verse and apt expression:

Prologue spoken at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre, 1747.

"When Learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes
First reared the stage, immortal Shakspere rose:
Each change of many-colour'd life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new:
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toiled after him in vain:
His powerful strokes presiding Truth impressed,
And unresisted Passion stormed the breast.

"Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,
To please in method, and invent by rule;
His studious patience and laborious art,
By regular approach assailed the heart:
Cold approbation gave the lingering bays,
For those who durst not censure scarce could praise.
A mortal born, he met the general doom,
But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.

"The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,
Nor wished for Jonson's art or Shakspere's fame;
Themselves they studied; as they felt they writ;
Intrigue was plot; obscenity was wit.
Vice always found a sympathetic friend;
They pleased their age, and did not aim to mend.
Their cause was general, their supports were strong,
Their slaves were willing, and their reign was long,
Till Shame regained the post that Sense betrayed,
And Virtue called Oblivion to her aid. . . .

"Then prompt no more the follies you decry,
As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die;
'Tis yours, this right, to bid the reign commence
Of rescued Nature and reviving Sense;
To chase the charms of sound, the pomp of show,
For youthful mirth and salutary woe;
Bid scenic Virtue form the rising age,
And Truth diffuse her radiance from the stage."

Richard Savage, Johnson's great friend, led a miserable life; partly through his own fault, partly through the unpardonable faults of others. He was the natural son of a lady of rank, who denied him when he discovered that she was his mother. When about thirty years of age, he developed some poetic power; and wrote three poems in heroic verse. The *Bastard*, in 1728, gave an account of his own wrongs and sufferings; the *Wanderer*, in the next year, described a long pilgrimage over Europe, and is supposed to be marked by the influence of Thomson; and the third, the *Progress of a Divine*, told of a wicked priest who got on in the world by his sins, yet in the end was rewarded by the patronage of a bishop.

The queen allowed Savage fifty pounds a year, and this money, after her death, was continued to him by friends, on the understanding that he left London and went to Wales. He accepted these terms for a short time, and then returned to London, only to be arrested for debt. He died in prison, and was buried at the expense of his gaoler.

Boswell, in an early chapter of his *Life of Johnson*, has some interesting passages with regard to the hardships of London life in 1738. "It is melancholy to reflect that Johnson and Savage *were sometimes in* such extreme indigence that they could not

pay for a lodging; so that they wandered together whole nights in the streets. He told Sir Joshua Reynolds that one night in particular, when Savage and he walked round St. James's Square, they were not at all depressed by their situation; but in high spirits, and brimful of patriotism, traversed the square for several hours, inveighed against the minister, and 'resolved they would *stand by their country*.'" Johnson, in after years, felt it very keenly that Savage should have fallen in the terrible struggle, when he himself had strength of mind to do well.

To illustrate the character of Savage from his own writings, it is worth noticing the lines which contain the design of the *Wanderer*:

> "I fly all public care, all venal strife,
> To try the still, compared with active, life;
> To prove, by these, the sons of men may owe
> The fruits of bliss to bursting clouds of woe;
> That ev'n calamity, by thought refined,
> Inspirits and adorns the thinking mind."

That he loathed the disreputable life his poverty forced him to lead, is shown in another part of the *Wanderer*, where he reflects upon his own conduct:

> "Though misery leads to happiness and truth,
> Unequal to the load, this languid youth;
> O, let none censure, if, untried by grief,
> If, amidst woe, untempted by relief,
> He stoop'd reluctant to low arts of shame,
> Which then, ev'n then, he scorned, and blush'd to name."

Speaking of his own young days, he writes:

> "No mother's care
> Shielded my infant innocence with prayer;
> No father's guardian hand my youth maintained,
> Called forth my virtues, or from vice restrained."

And it is with a melancholy tone that he sums up his aims and ambitions, feeling all too surely that they could never be attained:

> "By woe, the soul to daring action swells;
> By woe, in plaintless patience it excels;
> From patient prudence, clear experience springs,
> And traces knowledge through the course of things;
> Thence hope is found, thence fortitude, success,
> Renown—whate'er men covet and caress."

Robert Blair, born at Edinburgh in 1699, passed a quiet country life as a Scotch minister, and died at a comparatively

early age. The seclusion of his life caused him to be almost untouched by the movements and theories of the years in which he lived. His poem, *The Grave*, in eight hundred lines of blank verse, had consequently a sincere expression, and showed itself the genuine outcome of an honest heart. His work shows how well he knew Elizabethan literature, and in many respects his verse was more free and more natural than that of Young or Thomson. He is not distinguished for originality of thought, yet has the gift of repeating familiar ideas with a new expression. The lines quoted from *The Grave* are in this respect characteristic:

The Resurrection.

"When the dread trumpet sounds, the slumbering dust
Not inattentive to the call, shall wake,
And every joint possess its proper place
With a new elegance of form unknown
To its first state. Nor shall the conscious soul
Mistake its partner, but, amidst the crowd,
Singling its other half, into its arms
Shall rush with all the impatience of a man
That's just come home, who, having been long absent,
With haste runs over ev'ry different room
In pain to see the whole. Thrice happy meeting,
Nor time nor death shall part them ever more.
'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night,
We make the grave our bed, and then are gone.
Thus at the shut of e'en the weary bird
Leaves the wide air and, in some lonely brake,
Cowers down and dozes till the dawn of day,
Then claps his well-fledged wings, and bears away."

Edward Young, son of a rector at Upham, in Wiltshire, afterwards became Dean of Sarum. Young was sent to Winchester, and then to Oxford. He expected to attain some political position, but was disappointed in his hopes, and, at the age of fifty, took Holy Orders, accepting a college living, and held it until his death in 1765.

During his layman's life, he had produced volume after volume of dull verse, and three tragedies, all wanting in dramatic power. A satire upon Love, under the name of *The Universal Passion*, now entirely forgotten, attracted some attention in 1728. The only work at all remembered is his *Night Thoughts*, in nine books of blank verse.

Young deals with the profoundest themes—Life, Death, and Immortality. He treats them with gloomy imagination, yet occasionally rises to flights of good blank verse. The chief interest of the whole is that it represents very closely the spirit of the didactic age, to which Young really belonged.

James Thomson, the son of a Scotch minister, was educated at the University of Edinburgh, and in March, 1725, being himself just twenty-five, he left Scotland to seek his fortune in England. In a short time his introductions helped him, and he became tutor to the little son of Lord Binning, with whom his mother was connected. He wrote his *Winter* during the time of this tutorial work.

Thomson came to make the acquaintance of Pope, Arbuthnot, and Gay, and published his *Winter* in 1726. It passed quickly into its second edition, and the *Summer* appeared in 1727; the two other divisions, in the course of the first three years. Thomson's life was one of continual struggle. In 1734, after long tutorship, he was given the office of Secretary of Briefs in the Court of Chancery, but lost his post three years later, when the Lord Chancellor, who had given it to him, died. He had tried a tragedy, *Sophonisba*, in 1729, which had not been successful, and in two plays, *Agamemnon* and one other, he was scarcely more fortunate. In 1744 he published the only poem which was of any value, the *Castle of Indolence*, and two years afterwards he died.

The English of his *Seasons* is very much Latinized, but the words he chooses are appropriate, and his details are careful and correct. The book was successful, because it was a remarkable one for its time; genuine in its nature, and arousing an interest in natural beauty equal to the feeling that had been stirred by Gay's *Shepherd's Week*. *Winter* is generally regarded as the best part of the poem. Thomson, in that, speaks of things he really knows well, and he gives little pictures of rural experience charmingly touched off with a delicate and sympathetic hand. The robin, venturing, in the frost, to enter the house and pick up crumbs; the wife and children waiting for the father, who is dying in the snow; the group sitting round the hearth and telling ghost stories; are all drawn in a manner full of realism which is true, yet never hard. *Spring* is celebrated for the trout-fishing scene, and for its ending; *Autumn* has cheerful sketches of harvesting and hunting; and *Summer* of sheep washing and shearing. *Summer* is the longest of the four sections, and extraneous matter of a tedious nature is brought in. The whole poem ends with a remarkable *Hymn*, singing the praise of the Spirit of God as showing itself in every point of Nature's action. There are few poems in England which have had as wide an influence as the *Seasons*; there are still fewer whose influence has been so simple, yet so good. Though Young's work was generally didactic, the natural feeling of *The Seasons* showed that for some years the romantic movement had been thoroughly understood.

Showers in Spring.

"The north-east spends his rage; he now shut up
Within his iron cave, the effusive south
Warms the wide air, and o'er the void of heaven
Breathes the big clouds with vernal showers distent.
At first a dusky wreath they seem to rise,
Scarce staining ether; but by swift degrees,
In heaps on heaps, the doubling vapour sails
Along the loaded sky and mingling deep
Sits on the horizon round a settled gloom:
Not such as wintry storms on mortals shed,
Oppressing life; but lovely, gentle, kind,
And full of every hope and every joy,
The wish of nature. Gradual sinks the breeze
Into a perfect calm; that not a breath
Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,
Or rustling turn the many-twinkling leaves
Of aspen tall. The uncurling floods, diffused
In glassy breadth, seem through delusive lapse
Forgetful of their course. 'Tis silence all,
And pleasing expectation. Herds and flocks
Drop the dry sprig, and mute-imploring eye
The falling verdure. Hushed in short suspense,
The plumy people streak their wings with oil,
To throw the lucid moisture trickling off;
And wait the approaching sign to strike, at once,
Into the general choir. Even mountains, vales,
And forests seem, impatient, to demand
The promised sweetness. Man superior walks
Amid the glad creation, musing praise,
And looking lively gratitude. At last,
The clouds consign their treasures to the fields;
And, softly shaking on the dimpled pool
Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow,
In large effusion, o'er the freshened world.
The stealing shower is scarce to patter heard
By such as wander through the forest walks,
Beneath the umbrageous multitude of leaves.

His iron cave. Compare Milton, *Paradise Regained*, book iv., line 414:

"Nor slept the winds,
Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
From the four *hinges* of the world."

Prelusive, showing that something else is about to follow; like a prelude.

The Land of Indolence.

"It was, I ween, a lovely spot of ground:
And there a season atween June and May,
Half prankt with spring, with summer half imbrowned,
A listless climate made, where, sooth to say,
No living wight could work, ne carèd even for play.

Ween, think, fancy.

"Was nought around but images of rest:
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between;
And flowery beds that slumberous influence kest,
From poppies breathed; and beds of pleasant green,
Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
Meantime unnumbered glittering streamlets played,
And hurled everywhere their waters sheen;
That, as they bickered through the sunny glade,
Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made.

"Joined to the prattle of the purling rills,
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
And flocks loud-bleating from the distant hills,
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale:
And now and then sweet Philomel would wail,
Or stock-doves plain amid the forest deep,
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep;
Yet all these sounds yblent inclinèd all to sleep.

"Full in the passage of the vale, above,
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood;
Where nought but shadowy forms was seen to move,
As Idless fancied in her dreaming mood:
And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines, aye waving too and fro,
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood;
And where this valley winded out, below,
The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard, to flow.

"A pleasing land of drowsihead it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
For ever flushing round a summer sky."

Kest, cast.
Bickered, moved with a pattering noise.
Philomel, the nightingale.
Plain, complain; lament.
Coil, noise.
Idless, idleness.

XIX. THE CHANGE IN POETRY, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROSE.

71. The Minor Poets after Pope: Dyer, Allan Ramsay, Shenstone, Byrom, Churchill, Falconer, Chatterton, Akenside, the Wartons, Beattie, and Bishop Percy.

John Dyer and Allan Ramsay both survived Pope for fourteen years. Dyer, a Welshman, began life as a painter, but soon afterwards entered into Holy Orders. He wrote *Grongar Hill*, a poem of about two hundred lines, which appeared in 1726, the same year as Thomson's *Winter*; a piece of work

distinguished for a pretty and delicate touch in his appreciation of nature. *The Country World* possesses similar merits, and both poems show clearly his liking for Milton. A longer poem, called *The Fleece*, was regarded as his chief work, a verdict which later generations have hardly accepted. It began with a picture of sheep grazing on the downs, and described the work of a shepherd, and the function of a sheepshearing. This filled the first book, and in its studies of moral life it is almost as successful as the two little poems. The three other books were devoted to a glorification of trade, involving an absence of poetic thought.

The opening of *Grongar Hill*, though often abused, will speak best for itself:

"Silent nymphs, with curious eye;
Who, the purple evening, lie
On the mountains' lonely van,
Beyond the noise of busy man,
Painting fair the form of things,
While the yellow linnet sings;
Or the tuneful nightingale
Charms the forest with her tale;
Come with all the various hues,
Come, and aid thy sister Muse;
Now while Phœbus riding high
Gives lustre to the land and sky!
Grongar Hill invites my song,
Draw the landskip bright and strong;
Grongar, in whose mossy cells
Sweetly musing, Quiet dwells;
Grongar, in whose silent shade,
For the modest muses made,
So oft I have, the evening still,
At the fountain of a rill,
Sat upon a flowery bed,
With my hand beneath my head;
While strayed my eyes o'er Towy's flood,
Over mead, and over wood,
From house to house, from hill to hill,
Till Contemplation had her fill."

Allan Ramsay's long life extended from 1685 to 1758. He was born at a little hamlet among the hills between Annandale and Clydesdale, where his father worked in Lord Hopetoun's lead-mines. Allan, as a child, took part in the washing of the ore. When he grew bigger, he was sent to Edinburgh, and apprenticed to a barber, though he had always been fascinated by the songs and ballads of his country, and was possessed of a desire to become a poet. To get away from his uncongenial occupation he became a bookseller, and would have written better if he had not written so much.

By *The Gentle Shepherd*, a pastoral drama, his fame was secured in 1725. Though the plot is not remarkable, nor the characters very distinct, the rural scenes were sweet and pretty, and full of genuine poetic feeling. Ramsay's other work, which was of great value, consisted of two collections of old Scotch songs. One of these was called *The Evergreen*, and the other *The Tea-Table Miscellany*. *The Evergreen* contained Scotch poems written before 1600; the second was the volume from which Sir Walter Scott learnt his first poetry. In his writings, he declares "I was taught *Hardiknute* by heart before I could read the ballad myself. It was the first poem I ever learnt; the last I shall ever forget."

Ramsay was not himself a great poet; the really good influence he did exercise came about from the ballads that he rescued from neglect.

William Shenstone, born in 1714, was the son of a farmer who owned a small property in Worcestershire, known by the picturesque name of the Leasowes, an old English term, signifying the meadows where the seed is sown. Shenstone was sent to Oxford, where he made no use of its advantages; and, on his father's death, gave up the farming which had been done at Leasowes for so many generations, to spend all his money in filling the grounds with temples and grottoes. He fortunately never married, and after his death, at the age of forty-nine, the whole place had to be sold to meet the debt incurred by his folly. Shenstone, a man of weak temperament, had not been contented to remain a respectable farmer like his predecessors, and sought to move in a rank to which he did not belong. His real feelings were expressed in some of his verses; called, by a significant title, *Written in an Inn at Henley*. After four stanzas of sneers at conditions of life different from his own, he finished by declaring that the pleasantest existence for a man is that which he spends at an inn.

He had some liking for literature, yet was wanting in originality; and his so-called *Essays* on *Men*, *Manners*, and *Things* are little better than collections of notes. They exhibit, however, a capacity for criticism; and Shenstone has been remembered, chiefly because his views on literature were adverse to those of his own times. He had, too, a gift of writing light and lively verse, in which he produced some pretty effects, and they seem to have been taken subsequently as models by Cowper. Shenstone's weakness was shown when he tried to follow Spenser's magnificence in the *Faerie Quene*. His want of judgment was lamentable, when he chose it for a subject such as that of the *Schoolmistress*, which would have been better suited by the metre of Crabbe. Three stanzas from one of his *Pastoral Ballads* will be

enough to illustrate the ease of his verse production, and the narrowness of his thought:

"Since Phyllis vouchsafed me a look,
I never once dreamt of my vine:
May I lose both my pipe and my crook,
If I knew of a kid that was mine!
I prized every hour that went by,
Beyond all that had pleased me before;
But now they are past, and I sigh;
And I grieve that I prized them no more. . . .

"When forced the fair nymph to forego,
What anguish I felt at my heart!
Yet I thought—but it might not be so—
'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.
She gazed, as I slowly withdrew,
My path I could hardly discern;
So sweetly she bade me adieu,
I thought that she bade me return.

"The pilgrim that journeys all day
To visit some far distant shrine,
If he bear but a relique away
Is happy, nor heard to repine.
Thus widely removed from the fair
Where my vows, my devotion, I owe,
Soft Hope is the relique I bear
And my solace wherever I go."

We can turn with relief to a man of far greater capacity, John Byrom, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. A few lines from one of his pastorals displays a real strength, and an expression of genuine feeling, far removed from the inanities of Shenstone.

Byrom, a native of Manchester, distinguished himself at his university, and afterwards practised successfully as a physician. He was a man of varied talent, and later in life, being attracted by a new study, developed into a professor of shorthand. He fell in love with the daughter of Bentley, the hero of the *Phalaris* controversy, and extolled the young lady under the name of Phebe by a pastoral in the 603rd number of *The Spectator*.

Byrom's verse was most miscellaneous: a great deal was religious; another large portion, dialogues and pastoral songs in the Lancashire dialect; and numbers of epistles and epigrams. The following stanzas are taken from the poem addressed to Miss Bentley:

"My time, O ye muses, was happily spent,
When Phebe went with me wherever I went;
Ten thousand sweet pleasures I felt in my breast,
Sure never fond shepherd like Colin was blest!

But now she is gone, and has left me behind,
What a marvellous change on a sudden I find!
When things were as fine as could possibly be,
I thought 'twas the spring; but alas! it was she.

"With such a companion, to tend a few sheep,
To rise up and play, or to lie down and sleep;
I was so good-humoured, so cheerful and gay,
My heart was as light as a feather all day.
But now I so cross and so peevish am grown;
My fair one is gone, and my joys are all drown'd,
And my heart—I am sure it weighs more than a pound.

"Will no pitying pow'r that hears me complain,
Or cure my discomfort, or soften my pain?
To be cur'd thou must, Colin, thy passion remove;
But what swain is so silly as to live without love?
No, deity, bid the dear nymph to return,
For ne'er was poor so sadly forlorn.
Ah! what shall I do? I shall die of despair;
Take heed, all ye swains, how ye love one so fair."

Charles Churchill was the son of the curate and lecturer at St. John's, Westminster. He was sent to Westminster School, and would have taken a Trinity scholarship had his father been well enough off to let him go to Cambridge. He further disabled himself by marrying at seventeen, and was compelled to prepare for the Church, a profession for which he had no liking. He held curacies both in Wales and in Somerset; and returning to London in 1758, succeeded his father at St. John's.

His literary career, while it lasted, was a bright and promising one. He began, in 1761, with the *Rosciad*, named after the Roman actor Roscius, who was famous in the days of Pompey and Cicero. The poem was a critical satire upon the London stage, determined in its thought; written in rough, vigorous verse.

It related how the throne of Art in England came to be vacant, and described an assembly of celebrated poets and actors who met to decide upon the election of a king. In the centre of a spacious plane a tribunal was erected, where:

"In the first seat, in robe of various dyes,
A noble wildness flashing from his eyes,
Sat SHAKSPERE. In one hand a wand he bore,
For mighty wonders fam'd in days of yore;
The other held a globe, which, to his will
Obedient turn'd, and own'd the master's skill:
Things of the noblest kind his genius drew,
And look'd thro' nature at a single view:
A loose he gave to his unbounded soul,
And taught new lands to rise, new seas to roll;
Called into being scenes unknown before,
And passing Nature's bounds was something more.

"Next JONSON sat, in ancient learning train'd,
His rigid judgment Fancy's flights restrain'd,
Correctly prun'd each wild luxuriant thought,
Mark'd out her course, nor spar'd a glorious fault.
The book of man he read with nicest art,
And ransack'd all the secrets of the heart;
Exerted Penetration's utmost force,
And trac'd each passion to its proper source,
Then, strongly mark'd, in liveliest colours drew,
And brought each foible forth to public view.
The coxcomb felt a lash in ev'ry word,
And fools hung out, their brother-fools deterr'd.
His comic humour kept the world in awe,
And Laughter frighten'd Folly more than Law."

The candidates then passed the chair one by one, Churchill writing a satirical description of each. Fifty-four distinguished people presented themselves, of whose names those of some half-a-dozen—Foote, Garrick, Sterne, Sheridan, Gay, and Cibber—are the only ones known at the present day.

The critical moment of giving judgment then arrived:

"Now might I tell how silence reign'd throughout,
And deep attention hush'd the rabble rout:
How ev'ry claimant, tortur'd with desire,
Was pale as ashes, or as red as fire:
But, loose to Fame, the muse more simply acts,
Rejects all flourish, and relates mere facts,
The judges, as the sev'ral parties came,
With temper heard, with judgment weigh'd each claim,
And, in their sentence happily agreed,
In name of both, Great SHAKSPERE thus decreed:
'If manly Sense; if Nature, link'd with Art,
If thorough knowledge of the Human Heart;
If Pow'rs of acting vast and unconfin'd;
If fewest Faults, with greatest Beauties join'd;
If strong Expression, and strange Pow'rs, which lie
Within the magic circle of the Eye;
If feelings, which few hearts, like his, can know,
And which no face so well as His can show;
Deserve the Preference;—GARRICK, take the Chair;
Nor quit it—'till Thou place an Equal there.'"

The *Rosciad* was followed by a piece called *Night*, another satire upon the weaknesses of human nature, showing how the meditations of bedtime drew unpleasant conclusions from the actions of the day:

"Then we our friends, our foes, ourselves, survey,
And see by Night, what fools we are by Day."

The *Prophecy of Famine*, an attack upon the Scotch, came afterwards, and an *Epistle to Hogarth*, bitterly reproaching his *caricatures of Wilkes*.

Shortly after this he went to visit Wilkes, who was then exiled at Boulogne, and there died of a fever in November, 1764.

Churchill's other poems had been *The Ghost*, a vicious satire in eight syllabled couplets, abusing a number of public men whom he had reason to detest, and *The Duellist*, after the manner of Swift. He then returned to the heroic measure for a couple of sets of verses. In his writings he showed a definite wish to retain the methods of verse that had been used in the earlier years of the century.

William Falconer, born in 1732, the son of an Edinburgh barber, went to sea in the merchant service; and, about 1750, was wrecked off Cape Colonna, the south point of Boeotia, in Greece. His experiences of the storm, which lasted for five days, the horror of falling on the cliffs of St. George, and the final catastrophe, when the ship broke on the coast, gave Falconer an opportunity for writing the first English poem which described the struggle between man and the ocean. Falconer's work is necessarily crude and rough, yet of value, because it came from his heart. He was hampered by the only method of verse with which, in those days, an uneducated man would be acquainted; but the artificial couplet of Pope was the worst possible metre for expressing physical action.

The poem being dedicated to the young Duke of York, Falconer was rewarded for it by an appointment as purser in one of the royal men-of-war. He compiled a *Marine Dictionary*, regarded as a valuable book of its kind, and continued at sea until 1769. Then he was lost by the wreck of the *Aurora*, another royal ship; which, after her departure from the Cape, passed into the Indian Ocean, and was never seen or heard of again.

We come now to one of the most melancholy pictures in English literary history, that of Thomas Chatterton, the "boy-poet," whose miseries caused him to commit suicide in his eighteenth year.

Chatterton was born at Bristol, where his forefathers seem to have been sextons at St. Mary Redcliffe for more than a hundred and fifty years. His father was a sub-chanter at the cathedral, who died shortly before his son was born. He had been a man in the most straitened circumstances, and Chatterton was acquainted with poverty from his earliest days. As a child, he does not seem to have given much promise. When he was five years old, he could not be taught to read; a year and a half later, his mother and sister regarded him as "an absolute fool." A change came, when, at eight years old, he was admitted to the Blue-Coat School at Bristol; and the capacity for reading suddenly developed. He got all the knowledge that he could obtain

from his teachers; and, being allowed to read what he liked, devoured everything that attracted him at three libraries in the town. He quickly showed his taste in poetry, for the long experiences of his predecessors had given him a love of all ancient things. As the beauties of life began to dawn upon him, he spent much of his spare time in the precincts of the antique church, and was allowed to go into the muniment room, where a certain number of mediæval parchments were preserved. These documents he tried hard to read, and, to a certain extent, got some knowledge of their meaning. Speght's edition of Chaucer came in his way, and a *Dictionary* of the older forms of English. From such scanty sources, he seems to have put together a kind of strange and unreal dialect. He had got as far as this while he was little more than a small boy at school. When, on leaving the Blue-Coat, he was put into an attorney's office, he apparently found more leisure-time, and wrote numbers of verses in imitation of the old poems and papers.

He wished to teach himself their ways of writing, and to attempt to express in it the thoughts that he began to feel were rising in his own brain. Such an idea in itself would have been perfectly harmless, but Chatterton was apparently held back by his dread, that if he produced any verses as his own, nobody would ever believe he was their author. He then took the unwise step of trying to pass them off as manuscripts that his father, years before, had found in an old chest in the muniment room. The parchments were supposed to be the work of a monk named Rowley, who had lived at Bristol in the fifteenth century. In 1764, he produced the first of the so-called Rowley poems, written in the jargon he had put together. He never seems to have made any claim to the authorship of the verses, but said that his papers were translations or compilations from the original manuscripts. He finally sent up to Horace Walpole a treatise entitled *The Ryse of Peynctyne in Englande*, professedly written by *T. Rowlie*, 1469. Walpole was at first inclined to believe in its authenticity, until, on growing suspicious, he consulted Gray, who, being better acquainted with antiquarian matters, assured him that grammar and spelling were both impossible.

Some trouble that Chatterton got into at Bristol made him suddenly go up to London in the April of 1770. Here, with a purse of less than five pounds, he started on a literary career. He tried every kind of hack work, getting a few shillings for each, and during May and June had been successful enough to have articles in no less than six magazines. Just at this time, when he most needed help, he was given an introduction to Beckford, the then Lord Mayor, and author of the remarkable

romance, *Vathek*. Beckford was so struck with Chatterton's capacity, that Chatterton believed his danger to be past and gone. A terrible blow fell upon him when Beckford suddenly died, before doing anything towards Chatterton's relief. Chatterton fled from his lodgings in Shoreditch, and hid in a garret off Holborn. Here he lived in virtual starvation, and unsuccessfully stood for a post as ship's surgeon. When this attempt proved unsuccessful, he bought little keepsakes for his mother and sister, and sent them home. Then, locking himself up in his garret, he tore up all his manuscripts, and swallowed the poison he had purchased with his last few pence.

An attempt has been made to modernise Chatterton's writings. It is more wisely pointed out that the result is only to destroy the peculiar music of Chatterton's verse. Coleridge's "new principle," utilised afterwards by Scott and Byron, was known to Chatterton years before the days of *Christabel*. The principle consisted of the use of the anapaestic foot with the iambic. In the case of some of the *Miracle Plays*, and in one book of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, this freedom is seen, being used merely to give variation to the verse. In the case of Chatterton, as well as of Coleridge, who followed him, it was employed to show a change "in the nature of the imagery or passion."

In much the same manner that Coleridge shows this influence, so Keats does in the *Eve of St. Agnes*, which has a close relationship to the *Balade of Charitie*. Keats dedicated his *Endymion* to the memory of Chatterton; and though there is little reason to say that Chatterton was the father of the Romantic School, it is obvious that his poems exercised a strong influence on many of those who came after him in the next generation.

Mark Akenside, the son of a butcher at Newcastle-on-Tyne, was a curious man, who attempted more than he could attain. He was born in 1721, and, on a fund raised for the purpose, was sent to the University of Edinburgh to be trained for the dissenting ministry. Akenside preferred the study of medicine, and after three years at Edinburgh went over to Leyden, where, in another three years, he took his M.D. degree. At Leyden he became intimate with Jeremiah Dyson, a student of law, to whom he eventually owed all the pleasure and success of his life.

Akenside, from his boyish days, had intended to be a poet. He began, in his sixteenth year, with some verses in the Spenserian stanza, and as this was the earliest attempt in literature to follow the example of Spenser, coming, as it did,

Anapaestic foot, a poetic foot, the opposite of the dactyl—two short syllables followed by a long one.

before the similar efforts of Shenstone and Thomson, Akenside is entitled to the credit of having been first, even though his verses were not of any particular merit. His *Pleasures of Imagination* appeared in his twenty-third year, a poem in three books of stiff blank verse. Akenside defined, in one of his *Odes*, his conception of what poetry should be:

> "Reason clad in strains
> Of harmony, selected minds to inspire."

This implied that he desired to see, in verse, a union of poetical expression with philosophical thought. Hence, in his blank verse, he attempted a strange combination, trying to unite Addison's suggestions, in the *Essays on Imagination*, which had appeared in the *Spectator*, with the metaphysical views held by Shaftesbury. Akenside had little respect for the age in which he lived, there was a coarseness of life and a pandering to the *nouveau riche* which he found intensely distasteful. His verse-writing was therefore apt to become formal and pompous; while his dignity of manner, put on from good intentions, did not become him, and failed in its purpose. Akenside's ideas and theories had many points of value, but were pitched in too high a key to appeal to ordinary men. Thus his *Odes*, which are elegant and correct, have little feeling or emotion. Even the *Hymn to the Naiads*, written in his twenty-fifth year, has a coldness about it, which is out of keeping with the usual character of such a poem. Yet the concluding lines are dignified and beautiful. The poet speaks to the Naiads of the necessary difference between the environment of poets, and tries to explain the philosophic note which he realises is in his own work. This he endeavours to account for by showing one poet will sing of the gifts of Bacchus, or the exploits of Hercules, but that the poet who attempted higher themes would come, as he does, to the Naiads themselves.

> "But with you,
> O Naiads, far from that unhallowed rout,
> Must dwell the man whoe'er to praisèd themes
> Invokes the immortal muse. The immortal muse
> To your calm habitations, to the cave
> Corycian, or the Delphic mount, will guide
> His footsteps; and with unsullied streams
> His lips will bathe; whether the eternal lore
> Of Themis, or the majesty of Jove,
> To mortals he reveal; or teach his lyre
> The unenvied guerdon of the patriot's toils,

The cave Corycian. At the foot of Mount Parnassus, sacred to the Muses.

Delphic mount. A place where oracles were given at a shrine dedicated to Apollo.

Lore of Themis. Themis, daughter of Coelus and Terra, was famous in Attica for her oracles.

In those unfading islands of the blest,
Where sacred bards abide. Hail, honoured Nymphs!
Thrice hail! for you, the Cyrenaic shell
Behold, I touch, revering. To my songs
Be present, ye, with favourable feet,
And all profaner audience far remove."

Cyrenaic shell. The emblem of Cyrene, daughter of the river Peneus. Owing to her parentage, she was especially worshipped by the Naiads. The famous city of Cyrene, in Libya, was named in her honour.

Two brothers, Joseph and Thomas Warton, born respectively in 1722 and 1728, were the sons of the Vicar of Basingstoke, who had been a fellow of Magdalen and the Professor of Poetry, at Oxford. Thomas, the younger son, was the better poet of the two; and, like his father, obtained the Poetry Chair, as well as holding the Laureateship from 1785 until his death. Joseph is known as editor of Pope, and had a pretty gift of easy verse. According to the lights of his own days, he was a good critic.

His younger brother's work was of a higher type. The first volume of Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* came out in 1774, and was followed, four years later, by the second. He had preceded it with his *Observations on the Faerie Quene* in 1753, in which he did a great deal to assist the fresh growth of taste felt about the middle of the eighteenth century. He also helped to pull down the crude idea of the first half of the century, to the effect that no poet had existed before Dryden. His book marks an epoch in the growth of sensible criticism, and its value is certainly to be more regarded than its limitations are to be condemned. He despised the sham didacticism of the first half of the century, and had a real love for the charm of nature. His earlier poem, *The Triumph of Isis*, written after the manner of Pope, shows how, in his younger days, he fancied himself a disciple of Pope. His study of old English poetry wrought a wholesome change, and he was able to write *The First of April* and *To the River Lodon*. Two stanzas foretell a good deal of English verse, perhaps more definite in expression, but not surpassing Warton's work in tender and accurate observation. The sonnet might have suggested a considerable quantity of Wordsworth's verse.

The First of April.

"Scant along the ridgy land
The beans their new-born ranks expand:
The fresh-turned soil with tender blades
Thinly the sprouting barley shades:
Fringing the forest's devious edge,
Half-robed, appears the hawthorn hedge;
Or to the distant edge displays
Weakly green, its budding sprays.

"The swallow, for a moment seen,
Skims in haste the village green:
From the gray moor, on feeble wing,
The screaming plovers idly spring;
The butterfly, gay-painted soon,
Explores awhile the tepid noon;
And fondly trusts its tender dyes
To fickle suns, and flattering skies."

To the River Lodon.

"Ah! what a weary race my feet have run,
Since first I trod thy banks with alders crowned,
And thought my way was all through fairy ground,
Beneath thy azure sky, and golden sun,
Where first my muse to lisp her notes begun!
While pensive memory traces back the round,
Which fills the varied interval between;
Much pleasure, more of sorrow, marks the scene.
Sweet native stream! those skies and suns so pure
No more return, to cheer my evening road;
Yet still one joy remains, that not obscure,
Nor useless, all my vacant days have flowed,
From youth's gay dawn to manhood's prime mature;
Nor with the muse's laurel unbestowed."

James Beattie, the son of a tradesman in a small Scotch village, born 1735, became an usher at the Aberdeen Grammar School, and was a careful and delighted reader of Collins and Gray, and of Percy's *Reliques*. He was Professor of Moral Philosophy in 1760, and ten years later attacked Hume in his *Essay on Truth*. This effort was greatly applauded, and he was offered preferment in the English Church. In 1771, Beattie produced the first volume of *The Minstrel*, followed by the second volume, four years later; and afterwards wrote several volumes of criticism and æsthetic discussion. The interest attaching to Beattie's work does not depend upon his capacity as a poet; he had a skill in writing verse, but the employment of the Spenserian stanza for *The Minstrel* betrayed at once the weakness of his hand. He was not incorrect in his management of the stanza, in spite of its numerous difficulties; yet his verse was wanting in dignity, and his vein of thought never contained anything new. He is much at his best when dealing with the simple beauties of nature; and, in this way, his verse attracted a number of those who, towards the end of the century, longed for something to relieve them from the monotony of didacticism, and found the poets of the last years of the century too incomprehensible to understand.

The two following stanzas are sweet and sensible:

"But who the melodies of morn can tell?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain-side,

The lowing herd; the sheep-fold's simple bell;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lone valley; echoing far and wide.
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above,
The hollow murmur of the ocean tide;
The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

"The cottage-curs at early pilgrim bark;
Crowned with her pail the tripping milk-maid sings;
The whistling ploughman stalks afield; and hark!
Down the rough slope, the ponderous waggon rings;
Through rustling corn the hare astonished springs;
Slow tolls the village-clock the drowsy hour;
The partridge bursts away on whirling wings;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequestered bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aerial tower."

In spite of all the didactic work of the eighteenth century the general good sense of the English people had prevented a liking for the old ballads from ever being destroyed. On one or two occasions, Scotland, with the same feeling, had forestalled England. Allan Ramsay's work has already been noticed; it remains now to be said that it was probably inspired by James Watson, printer to the king, who, between the years 1706 and 1711, produced a *Choice Collection* of old Scotch songs, and pieces from the writings of various Scotch poets.

It was, however, before Ramsay worked, that in England the movement had actually begun. Tom D'Urfey collected a number of quaint songs, and published them under the title of *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, which preserved many old lyrics from oblivion. This book, which appeared in 1719, is still famous; it was followed, four years later, by another collection of *Old Ballads*; since its day, often reprinted.

Two other volumes can be only mentioned by name; the *Muses' Library*, declared to have been edited by a lady, now attributed to a famous antiquary of the time named Oldys. This book dealt with English verse from the days of Langland to the end of the sixteenth century. In 1760, Edward Capell's *Prolusions* were reprinted, very remarkable pieces of early sixteenth-century verse; and five years later appeared the best known of all these anthologies, in the shape of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.

Thomas Percy, born in 1729, was the son of a grocer at Bridgnorth, and went to Oxford on an exhibition by his native town's grammar school. For twenty-five years he was a Northamptonshire vicar, during which time he published the *Reliques*. He received the appointment of chaplain to the Duke of Northumberland, since his father, in spite of his humble calling, could

claim kinship with the Percies. He became Dean of Carlisle, and eventually Bishop of Dromore, in Ireland.

Percy was a man of considerable literary taste, especially in connection with poetry, and was intimate with the clever men, known as the wits, who belonged to the later years of the eighteenth century. He was often criticised and reproved for the alterations he made in the texts of the ballads he selected, though, at his time, the art of editing was hardly known; and any important ancient writings, if published, were generally changed to suit the tastes of the day. Sir Walter Scott always remembered with pleasure the spot where he made his first acquaintance with Percy's *Reliques*, and declared that he read no book "half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm." Its volumes, though not well edited, greatly increased the general interest for old English song.

72. Two Great Writers of the Transition—Dr. Johnson, LL.D. (1709-1784), and Oliver Goldsmith, M.B. (1728-1774).

(1) Samuel Johnson, LL.D.

Of all the questions arising in connection with the eighteenth century, one of the most difficult to decide is the length of its various periods. It is convenient, even if not quite accurate, to regard the time of Transition as lasting from the middle of Pope's life to the production of Cowper's *Task*. If this be expressed in the actual dates, the period extends from 1716 to 1785; but it is always to be remembered that such dates are signposts, rather than definite boundaries.

Though in their lives both Johnson and Goldsmith belonged entirely to the Transition period, their work was marked by a strong didactic feeling. Johnson represented the best aspects of English common-sense. Goldsmith looked upon life from the more tender and emotional side; and by so doing touched upon aspects of human nature which Johnson seldom described. This led to a romantic element in much of Goldsmith's work, though he always avoided any imitation of the sentimental work which had been originated in the drama by Steele. Johnson and Goldsmith were contented with being sound versifiers, who truly loved humanity and honestly desired to follow the right.

Samuel Johnson, born at Lichfield in 1709, was the son of a bookseller, who, though anxious to give his boy a good education, was hindered by his lack of means. When Samuel was seven it was found possible to send him to the Lichfield Grammar School, until, at fifteen, he was obliged to leave and become an assistant teacher. Four years later, by the help of a kind friend, Samuel was enabled to enter at Pembroke College,

Oxford. Poverty, nevertheless, was always his stumbling-block, though he preserved a proud independence, and held his own. To stand at the college gate in a ragged gown, discoursing philosophy and theology to a group of wondering undergraduates, was to Johnson a pleasant pastime. To hurl from his room a pair of new shoes, which a friend had slipped inside his oak, was a duty he owed to his own self-respect.

He remained at Oxford during the vacations as well as the terms, but for lack of means was unable to reside more than fourteen months, and for a brief time later on, in 1731. He then had to leave, on account of his father's death, by which the family distress was increased still more; and for the next five years, the details of his life are almost unknown. He seems to have become an usher, and to have done such literary work as he was able to obtain.

In 1736, when he was only twenty-seven, he married a widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Porter, who was forty-eight. The marriage was not as incongruous as it might appear. A malady from which Johnson suffered, deprived him of control over face or gesture. Mrs. Porter, in spite of these infirmities, nursed him with her fondest love and care; and Johnson, who was very sensitive over his personal defects, developed a deep gratitude for her goodness.

Shortly after the marriage had taken place Johnson started a school with a little money that his wife was able to supply. The venture was disastrous. Only three pupils appeared, and in 1737 Johnson had to leave Lichfield, to see what possibility there might be of making a living in London. David Garrick, afterwards the famous actor, had been one of Johnson's pupils; and, regardless of Johnson's oddities, had come to love him dearly. He therefore insisted upon accompanying his old master; so Johnson, in possession of twopence-halfpenny, and Garrick, of three halfpence, started bravely on their long tramp to the metropolis. How they lived at first has never been known. By some means they arrived in London, and probably led a hand-to-mouth existence, until good fortune fell to Garrick. This was an unexpected bequest of a thousand pounds. With it, Garrick did all he could to make Johnson comfortable; and then, fulfilling the dream of years, he went upon the stage, the rest of his life being crowned with happiness and success.

Johnson put himself into the hands of Cave, the publisher of a still-living periodical, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and for him did all kinds of miscellaneous work at starvation pay. In the May of 1738 he produced the poem *London*, which has been already dealt with, and for which Dodsley, another publisher, gave him ten pounds. For years he worked hard, though

with little success, and only by slow degrees emerged from poverty.

His *Life of Savage* appeared in 1744, a book with much grace and dignity of style. Few biographies had yet been written in England, and Johnson's work created a large amount of interest. Three years more of toil followed, from which he tried to escape by issuing his *Plan of an English Dictionary*. Herein Johnson showed where his ambition lay, for that one man should undertake such a task had been long regarded as impossible. In the hope of getting supporters and subscribers, he dedicated his prospectus to Lord Chesterfield, who gave him ten pounds and did no more.

Next summer his wife, an invalid, spent a short holiday at Hampstead, where Johnson joined her, and in an unaccustomed leisure wrote his best poem, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*.

David Garrick, after twelve years of hard work following on the famous walk to London, had become as prosperous as Johnson was poor. Even before his hasty departure from Lichfield Johnson had written a five-act tragedy in blank verse, and though in the interval he had attempted many times to dispose of it, he was unsuccessful. Every manager who read it approved of it, yet its production was a thing that not one of them would undertake.

A recollection of this token of their days of poverty came into Garrick's mind, and, for their long friendship's sake, he went to Johnson, insisting that, as he was now in command of Drury Lane, *Irene* should have a fair trial. Johnson, unwilling to consent, and fearing that time would have made it more dull than it was when first written, at last yielded to Garrick's kindness, and *Irene* was played for nine nights. A hundred pounds for copyright, and nearly two hundred pounds for author's work, were the sums that Johnson received.

His next enterprise was the *Rambler*, supposed to be done on the lines of Addison's *Spectator*, but Johnson's style bore no resemblance to Addison's and Steele's. The common words of English were carefully avoided, and Latin construction was too closely followed to make the essays light and cheerful. Johnson learnt a valuable lesson from this experience; and in the *Lives of the Poets*, a great improvement in his prose was shown.

His Dictionary, at which he had been toiling for so many years, was, by the end of 1774, nearly ready for publication. The Earl of Chesterfield greeted it with two preliminary letters, which appeared in the *World* just before the Dictionary came out; so Johnson replied with a letter to Lord Chesterfield, declining the patronage of one who seven years before had given him no real help, and during the seven years of great difficulties

had offered him no help at all. The University of Oxford, to assist the Dictionary, conceded to Johnson the degree of M.A.; the University of Dublin, of their own accord, gave him an LL.D.

In April, 1758, a series of papers entitled the *Idler* began to appear in the *Universal Chronicle*. They were much better than the similar work in the *Rambler*, for Johnson wrote them with greater freedom; they were consequently more natural and more easy to read. One essay a week in this series was kept up in the *Chronicle* for the space of two years.

The Dictionary did not bring much money to Johnson. Two hundred and twenty-five pounds had been paid him each year, and out of the sum he had to buy many costly reference books and to pay six amanuenses. When the book was finished Johnson was arrested for debt, Richardson, the novelist, at once coming to his help.

In 1759, on his mother's death, he had not even then enough to pay for the funeral. To provide for it he was obliged to write a story, for which he was to be paid a hundred pounds, and in the evenings of one week he completed *Rasselas*. To save him from the continuance of such unhappy conditions, a group of intimate friends represented his case privately to Lord Bute. George the Third, the most kind-hearted of men, on being told of the matter by Bute, immediately assented to a pension of three hundred pounds a-year being given to Johnson for the remainder of his life. The celebrated interview between King George and Johnson, which took place some nine years later, made the King all the more certain that his decision had been wise.

Johnson's life at once became more cheerful, and he himself felt capable of doing good work. This he showed, when the Wilkes riots began to rage, by joining vigorously in the fray with four excellent pamphlets.

On approaching his sixtieth year, and finding himself in more robust health than he had ever before experienced, Johnson believed that he could actually take part in a trip which his friend Boswell had pressed upon him. Its object was a journey to the Scottish Highlands and the Hebrides. For three months and a half he was away from London; passing up the east coast of Scotland, crossing by Inverness, visiting most of the Hebrides, and returning by Boswell's home at Auchinleck to Edinburgh. His book on the *Journey to the Western Islands* came out late in the year. It was read eagerly, for his fame was then widely known.

Johnson then began his last great work, generally called the *Lives of the Poets*. Its original title was *Prefaces, Biographical*

and Critical, to the most Eminent of the English Poets. The poems were issued in sixty-eight volumes, while Johnson's Prefaces, or Lives, were specially collected into four.

His criticisms are necessarily out of accord with the views of modern days. To nineteenth century readers Johnson has seemed incapable of passing correct judgments on the merits or demerits of true poets. Thus the portions of his book which deal with comparatively unimportant writers have more value at the present time than his attempts to estimate the work of Milton. Their merit lies in the fact that they tell us of many versifiers whose names are now almost forgotten; and it is interesting to notice that, with regard to such men, Johnson's own work was far better than when he dealt with those for whom he had little or no regard. Writing of Gray, and speaking with his accustomed frankness, he declared, "Gray's poetry is now to be considered, and I hope not to be looked upon as an enemy to his name if I confess that I contemplate it with less pleasure than his life." In many respects the *Lives of the Poets* show Johnson at his best as a writer of prose. His sentences are easy and flowing; his quick humour is frequently displayed; the matter of the book is full of wise thought. An edition of selections, avoiding the incorrect criticisms of many passages, and relying chiefly upon his comments on writers of his own time, would give great help towards a true understanding of his real value in English literature.

The last two years of Johnson's life were sad and lonely. He died in 1784 at his house in Bolt Court, Fleet Street, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. It has been excellently said that "for thirty years he talked good English literature. His friends heard him, his contemporaries heard about him, and for twenty-one years Boswell preserved for us the best things that he said. He became Dictator of the world of letters; and, with intellect so great, a character so true, and humour so good, his decisions, even when vehemently given, were regarded as judgments from which there was no appeal."

(2) Johnson's "Rasselas."

Johnson's one prose story is essentially didactic. Johnson, in a deliberate and graceful prose, told the experiences of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia, who passed his life in a Happy Valley, which, by the law of his land, he was forbidden to leave. The natural result was that in his six-and-twentieth year he was consumed with a desire to see something of the world that lay outside the surrounding mountains. He took into his confidence a wise man named Imlac, who had known the world too well, yet found the Valley extremely tedious. He had no objection

to revisiting the world, and proposed a method of escape to the Prince, which appeared quite feasible. This was the plan of making a passage through the caves which pierced one mountain near to its summit; a task instantly undertaken by the Prince and accomplished in the course of a few days. Just as it was finished, Rasselas, on leaving the cave, found his sister, the Princess Nekayah, standing before the mouth of the cavity. She told him she had not come as a spy, and was only anxious, as she suspected he was meditating his escape, to be allowed to accompany him; a proposal to which the Prince most gladly assented. On the following day, with Imlac as their guide, they made a safe passage through the caverns, and, issuing to the top of the mountain, beheld the Nile, yet a narrow current wandering beneath them. After some stay among the villages, in order to accustom them to mingling with human beings, they took a boat and voyaged down the Nile to Suez, whence they travelled by land to Cairo.

They were delighted with the city, and stayed there for two years. Rasselas, surprised how many happy men there seemed to be, endeavoured to find out how and where happiness might be secured. He thought his best way was to mingle with every section of the community, and so to discover where most happiness was found. He first associated with the young men of the city, but their lives appeared to him empty and useless, and he left them with disdain. He had, he thought, seen elsewhere a wise and happy man in the person of a philosopher, who exhorted everybody to secure happiness by invulnerable patience. Rasselas, visiting the philosopher, found him in a disturbed condition in consequence of the sudden death of his daughter. He had been counting upon the support of this daughter in his old age. Rasselas asked him if the doctrines he had taught did not now console him; the philosopher answered snappishly, "What comfort can truth and reason afford me?" Rasselas hastily departed; philosophy alone did not seem to make happiness certain. The Prince tried many experiments of the same kind with no satisfactory result. He got a glimpse of pastoral life, of a hermit's solitude, of a life according to Nature, which seemed to be the most unsatisfactory of all. He examined the possibilities of happiness in high stations and in married life; and could discover no conclusion as to its source.

To get cheerful, his sister and he paid a visit to the Pyramids and Catacombs. Imlac accompanied them; and while in the Catacombs, entertained them with a discourse upon the nature of the soul. On their return to Cairo they found the Nile beginning to rise, and the inundations confined them to their house.

They spent their time in talking over the various methods of life that they had seen, and each declared what they would wish for to make them truly happy. The Princess desired to found a college for learned women, where she would preside. The Prince wanted a little kingdom to administer justice in his own person and see all the parts of government with his own eyes. The difficulty was that he could never fix the limits of his dominion, and was always adding to the number of his subjects. Imlac was contented to drift as comfortably as he could down the stream of life.

"Of these wishes that they had formed, they knew well that none could be obtained. They deliberated for a while what was to be done, and resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abyssinia."

(3) Oliver Goldsmith, M.B.

One of the most charming figures in the world of literature is that of Goldsmith. Few men have possessed so sweet and lovable a character; few have been gifted with the same delightful powers. Not many have known an equal amount of trouble and distress, and none have borne their misfortunes with similar cheerfulness.

Oliver, the son of a soft-hearted Irish clergyman, was born in 1728, at Pallas in Longford; his first teacher being an old soldier of Marlborough's wars, who charmed the boys with wonderful stories of his campaigns. He entered Trinity College, Dublin, in the year of the great Jacobite rising, where he did well in his classics and "could turn an ode of Horace with any of them." His father meant that he should go into the Church, but after two years' work Oliver failed to pass the Bishop's examination. He then started for London to study law, and on his way, stopping in Dublin, spent all his money, and returned home disgraced.

His father gave him another chance, and sent him to Edinburgh to make himself a doctor, which he tried to do, until, after staying two years, he crossed to the continent, and remained for some time at the medical schools of Leyden and Louvain. His next caprice was to wander through Switzerland, Italy, and France, supporting himself in the villages by playing on his flute. The rustics danced to his tunes and willingly gave him his food. In 1756 he made his way back to England, and attempted to gain a livelihood in London. He was in turns a chemist's assistant, a proof corrector, a physician among the poor, an usher, and a critic. In 1758 he entered for an examin-
-on at Surgeon's Hall and failed, with the result of being
-d back to literature. His residence, until 1760, was in

Green Arbour Court, Old Bailey—a dirty little square entered from Farringdon Street by a passage known as Break-neck Steps. The square has long since been swept away.

Goldsmith's first book was *The Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe*, written at Green Arbour Court in the midst of a struggle with dire poverty. Yet so sweet was Goldsmith's temperament, that, in verse full of laughter and tears, he could thus describe himself lying at his wretched lodgings:

> "The window, patched with paper, lent a ray
> That feebly showed the state in which he lay;
> The sanded floor that grits beneath the tread,
> The humid wall, with paltry pictures spread;
> The game of Goose was there exposed to view,
> And the twelve rules the Royal Martyr drew;
> The Seasons, framed with listing, found a place,
> And Prussia's monarch showed his lamp-black face.
> The morn was cold; he views with keen desire
> A rusty grate, unconscious of a fire;
> An unpaid reckoning on the frieze was scored,
> And five cracked teacups dressed the chimney-board."

The *Inquiry* was luckily successful. The notices of critics with one exception were all favourable, and his book brought him into connection with the publisher of the *Critical Review*, and with Smollett, who was then editor. In the course of the next year Goldsmith's acquaintances rapidly increased.

Among the friends that he made, was a clergyman named Percy, who was very fond, in after years, of describing the strange incidents of his visit to Green Arbour Court; from that day, however, a life-long friendship existed between the two men. Percy will be recognised as the subsequent Bishop of Dromore and editor of the *Reliques*. Goldsmith also got on intimate terms with Smollett, and in 1759 they began to work together. The contrast was great between the cautious Scotchman and the impulsive Irishman, but Smollett had perception keen enough to recognise the real worth that lay under the odd exterior. He was then just venturing on a new sixpenny monthly, with the patriotic title of the *British Magazine*; and felt that Goldsmith could be of useful assistance. On New Year's Day of 1760 the first number appeared, with a dedication to Pitt and a royal licence to Dr. Smollett as its editor. Goldsmith became a regular contributor, and twenty of his essays, some in his best and most attractive style, appeared in it during 1761 and 1762.

A still greater success was obtained by a series of papers printed in the *Public Ledger*. Goldsmith had been asked by the proprietor to provide an amusing article twice a week, and one or two were written. The idea then occurred to Goldsmith of turning them into letters as coming from an imaginary China-

man, resident in London, who sent home his experiences to his Chinese friends. This scheme gave Goldsmith an opportunity of producing admirable character sketches, with comments on all current subjects, held together by a slight story. The first of these papers appeared on the 24th of January, 1760, but no announcement of any series was made. The second followed on the 29th; the third, on the 31st. By that time, the readers of the paper looked anxiously for them, and the editor gave them the principal place. Ninety-eight letters appeared in all, and these, with a few additions, made up the volume of the *Citizen of the World*, now deservedly regarded as an English classic. The Gentleman in Black, Beau Tibbs, and even the philosophic Chinaman, stand almost on the level of Sir Roger de Coverley and Will Honeycomb.

Goldsmith's success led to a change as desirable as it was agreeable. This was a move from the purlieus of Green Arbour Court to better lodgings in Wine Office Court, Fleet Street. With an income of two hundred and fifty to three hundred a year, Goldsmith lived in comparative luxury. From his circle of friends and acquaintances, which by 1761 had greatly increased, he began to entertain a chosen few in his new rooms. A supper on the 31st of May was marked by a famous incident. Goldsmith had made Johnson's acquaintance some time before, and knew him slightly. On this occasion Johnson accepted Goldsmith's invitation, and the great intimacy of the two men began. Goldsmith, in his journalistic work, had praised only three of his contemporaries with any real admiration. These three were Gray, Smollett, and Johnson. Gray, living in Cambridge, came seldom to London. Smollett, when Goldsmith began to win a front place, was ill with over-work and forced to go away. Johnson was fifty-two, nineteen years Goldsmith's senior; his best work had been done, his position was secure, he was the king of literary England. The relations between Johnson and Goldsmith became those of intimate and affectionate friends, and no longer of monarch and subject. This was shown in many odd ways. When Goldsmith's *Life of Beau Nash* was published in the autumn of 1762, Johnson, who seldom bought books, instantly secured a copy.

Goldsmith soon after moved out of London to lodge in the rural suburb of Canonbury, by Islington. Here he escaped from a trying atmosphere, and yet was within a walk of his friends in town. His further acquaintance with Johnson brought about an introduction to the celebrated Mr. Joshua Reynolds, then living at his charming mansion in Leicester Fields. About this time was founded a famous club, at first unnamed, but afterwards called the "Literary Club," which met

at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street, Soho. The original members included Johnson, Reynolds, Burke, as well as Goldsmith, who took rooms again in London in addition to his Canonbury apartments in order that he might have a convenient place to go to after the evening meetings.

In 1764 came the eventful incident in Goldsmith's life, which has been so often told, and by no one better than Johnson. This was the episode of his quarrel with the Canonbury landlady. Goldsmith had found himself unable to pay his rent, and sent for Johnson in his distress. Johnson came at once, and asked Goldsmith what he could do to free him from his trouble. Goldsmith said he had the manuscript of a novel ready; which Johnson looked at, and quickly saw how excellent it was. He hurried to town with it, and took it to a young man who had just started as a publisher, advising him to buy it at once. Probably from awe of the great Doctor, the publisher handed him sixty pounds for Goldsmith, and put the manuscript on one side. Johnson hastened back with the money, and, shortly after, found Goldsmith had by him as well the manuscript of a poem called the *Traveller*. This poem Johnson greatly admired, and advised Goldsmith to get it published without delay. Goldsmith took his advice, and sold the poem for twenty guineas.

The *Traveller* in spite of applause did not bring Goldsmith much money, and the payment for the *Vicar of Wakefield* probably all went months before the book appeared. Though it was not issued until March, 1766, a second edition was called for in May, and a third in August.

The next few years were full of anxiety for Goldsmith; he had to fall back upon his hack-work and give up all hope of writing novels and poems as they should be done. The drama, however, he had not yet tried, and it seemed as if in that direction a better income might be found. Taking infinite pains he wrote the *Good-Natured Man*, which was produced at Drury Lane in January, 1768. It brought Goldsmith between three and four hundred pounds, upon the receipt of which he moved into chambers in the Temple, and lived cheerfully with his friends.

He then fell into the error of undertaking too much compilation, for which he was paid a large portion of the agreed sum before the work was done. The *History of the Earth* and *Animated Nature* was to be in eight volumes at a hundred guineas a volume. Five hundred guineas were paid before the work was begun, which had to be wiped out like the clearing of a debt, while other labour was carried on at the same time. A *History of Rome*, another of *Greece*, and another of *England*, were all produced during these years. The only relaxation for

Goldsmith was the writing of *The Deserted Village*, which appeared in 1770, the copyright bringing him a hundred guineas. The next year he was busy with another comedy, which, by delays at the theatre, was not produced until 1773; it then brought Goldsmith some four or five hundred pounds, and six thousand copies of the book were sold within a year. This comedy was his famous play, *She Stoops to Conquer*, dedicated in the most touching terms to Johnson.

Towards the end of 1773 he resolved to avenge himself, in a good-natured way, upon men in the club who laughed and sneered at him. The result was the writing of a lampoon named *Retaliation*, left unfinished at the time of his death.

In the spring of 1774 he fell ill, and was seized with a nervous fever. From the 25th of March to the 4th of April he lay in great danger, telling his physicians that his mind was not at ease. At half-past four in the morning of the 4th April, he died. He was buried in the grounds of the Temple Church, and a monument to him, with a Latin inscription by Johnson, was erected two years later in Westminster.

Johnson's words were his best epitaph: "Let not his frailties be remembered. He was a very great man." Burke, when he heard the news of the death, burst into tears. Reynolds, told of it when he was busy painting, threw down his brush, left the studio, and did no more work that day.

(4) Goldsmith's Writings.

Goldsmith's first book, the *Inquiry into the State of Learning*, was sensibly planned, had not the subject been too vast for so small a scale. Goldsmith began by describing the causes which contributed to the decline of learning, and gave a brief sketch of the obscure ages which followed the decline of the Roman Empire. He proceeded to discuss the condition at the then present time, and described the state of learning in Italy, Germany, Holland, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, and France. He turned next to deal with England; and his remarks upon the controversy between the use of blank verse or rhymed verse are moderate and to the point. "From the desire of the critics of grafting the ancient languages upon the English have proceeded of late several disagreeable instances of pedantry. Among the number I think we may reckon blank verse. Nothing but the greatest sublimity of subject can render such a measure pleasing; however, we now see it used upon the most trivial occasions. It has particularly found its way into our didactic poetry, and is likely to bring that kind of composition into disrepute, for which the English are deservedly famous.

"Those that are acquainted with writing know that our

language runs almost naturally into blank verse. The writers of our novels and romances, and all of this class who have no notion of style, naturally hobble into this inharmonious measure. If rhymes, therefore, be more difficult, for that very reason I would have our poets write in rhyme. . . .

"By the power of one single monosyllable our critics have almost got the victory over humour amongst us. Does the poet paint the absurdities of the vulgar? then he is *low*. Does he exaggerate the features of folly to render it more thoroughly ridiculous? then he is very *low*. . . . Let us, instead of writing finely, try to write naturally; not hunt after lofty expressions to express mean ideas; nor be for ever gaping when we only mean to deliver a whisper."

Two chapters on the stage of the day and on universities conclude the book. The first has now lost the interest of its time, the second is full of remarks admirable in any age. Goldsmith has a sensible objection to the person who criticises universities without real knowledge of them. "We attribute to universities," he writes, "either too much or too little. Some assert that they are the only proper places to advance learning, while others deny even their utility in forming an education. Both are erroneous." He is also sound in objecting to the admission of men who are not fitted for a university career. He realises that the prosperity of a college is not attained by throwing it open to a miscellaneous crowd. "The greatest number of universities," he tersely remarks, "have ever been founded in times of the greatest ignorance."

In *The Citizen of the World* and the *Essays*, Goldsmith had no wish to do more than to sketch his characters lightly, and draw from just the particular point in which they had come under his observation. The study of a growth and development of character, as wanted in a novel, was a task he was unwilling to attempt. The following extract, Letter 54, shows how keenly and quickly he saw through the foibles of human nature; his touch is a light and delicate one, but he possibly felt it might grow weak if he employed it in lengthened description.

Little Great Men.

(From *The Citizen of the World*. From Lien Chi Altangi [a Chinese philosopher, residing in London] to Fum Hoam, First President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin in China.)

"In reading the newspapers here, I have reckoned up not less than twenty-five great men, seventeen very great men, and nine very extraordinary men, in less than the compass of half a year. These, say the gazettes, are the men that posterity are to gaze at with admiration; these the names that fame will be employed in holding up for the astonishment

of succeeding ages. Let me see: forty-six great men in half a year amount to just ninety-two in a year. I wonder how posterity will be able to remember them all, or whether the people in future times will have any other business to mind, but that of getting the catalogue by heart.

"Does the mayor of a corporation make a speech? he is instantly set down for a great man. Does a pedant digest his common-place book into a folio? he quickly becomes great. Does a poet string up trite sentiments in rhyme? he also becomes the great man of the hour. How diminutive soever the object of admiration, each is followed by a crowd of still more diminutive admirers. The shout begins in his train, onward he marches to immortality, looks back at the pursuing crowd with self-satisfaction; catching all the oddities, the whimsies, the absurdities, and the littlenesses of conscious greatness, by the way.

"When a man has once secured a circle of admirers, he may be as ridiculous here as he thinks proper; and it all passes for elevation of sentiment or learned absence. If he transgresses the common forms of breeding, mistakes even a tea-pot for a tobacco-box, it is said that his thoughts are fixed on more important objects: to speak and to act like the rest of mankind is to be no greater than they. There is something of oddity in the very idea of greatness; for we are seldom astonished at a thing very much resembling ourselves.

"I have visited many countries, and have been in cities without number, yet never did I enter a town which could not produce ten or twelve of those little great men, all fancying themselves known to the rest of the world, and complimenting each other upon their extensive reputation. It is amusing enough when two of these domestic prodigies of learning mount the stage of ceremony, and give and take praise from each other. I have been present when a German doctor, for having pronounced a panegyric upon a certain monk, was thought the most ingenious man in the world, till the monk soon after divided this reputation by returning the compliment; by which means they both marched off with universal applause.

"The same degree of undeserved adulation that attends our great man while living, often also follows him to the tomb. It frequently happens that one of his little admirers sits down big with the important subject, and is delivered of the history of his life and writings. This may probably be called the revolutions of a life between the fireside and the easy-chair. In this we learn the year in which he was born, at what an early age he gave symptoms of uncommon genius and application, together with some of his smart sayings, collected by his aunt and mother, while yet but a boy. The next book introduces him to the university, where we are informed of his amazing progress in learning, his excellent skill in darning stockings, and his new invention for papering books to save the covers. He next makes his appearance in the republic of letters, and publishes his folio. Now the colossus is reared; his works are eagerly bought up by all the purchasers of scarce books. The learned societies invite him to become a member; he disputes against some foreigner with a long Latin name, conquers in the controversy, is complimented by several authors of gravity and importance, is excessively fond of egg-sauce with his pig, becomes president of a literary club, and dies in the meridian of his glory. Happy they who thus have some little faithful attendant, who never forsakes them, but prepares to wrangle and to praise against every opposer; at once ready to increase their pride while living, and their character when dead. For you and I, my friend, who have no humble

Whimsies, quaint fancies, inclined to melancholy.

admirer thus to attend us; we, who neither are, nor never will be, great men, and who do not much care whether we are great men or no; at least let us strive to be honest men, and to have common sense.—Adieu."

In this same year of 1764 Goldsmith wrote his poem *The Traveller*, making an interesting comparison between the English and the French. The poem was sold at the price of eighteenpence, and for the first time his name, as an author, appeared on a title-page. The publication marks a great event in Goldsmith's life. In the Dedication he claimed to be recognised as a British poet, and upheld the arguments with regard to verse which he had employed in the *Polite Learning*. The stanzas of Spenser, the blank verse of Thomson, the odes of Gray and Collins, were alike distasteful to him. Goldsmith used no new forms, and kept to the rhymed heroic couplet—going back as far as Pope, modelling himself on Pope's style, yet adding to it a gentleness and sweetness.

He declared he had made a return to simplicity of expression and truth of feeling, and especially threw down his gage at the feet of Churchill. "Him," wrote Goldsmith, "they dignify with the name of poet: his tawdry lampoons are called satires; his turbulence is said to be force, and his frenzy, fire." Goldsmith justified his criticisms. As limpidity was the distinguishing mark of Addison's prose, so grace was the feature of Goldsmith's poetry.

The Traveller came at a fortunate time. Johnson had long since given up writing; Young was near his death; Gray, living in retirement, did not publish his *Odes* until three years later; Akenside and Smollett had done their best in poetry, with little effect. The reading world was quite ready for some tender and simple verse, and all the reviews gave *The Traveller* their highest praise. Johnson from that time regarded Goldsmith as one of the leaders of English literature.

France and the French.

(From *The Traveller.*)

"To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
I turn; and France displays her bright domain.
Gay sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleased with thyself, whom all the world can please,
How often have I led thy sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire!
Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And freshened from the wave the zephyr flew;
And haply, though my harsh touch, faltering still,
But mocked all tune, and marred the dancer's skill;
Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour.
Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days
Have led their children through the mirthful maze,

And the gay grandsire, skilled in gestic lore,
Has frisked beneath the burden of threescore.
So blest a life these thoughtless realms display;
Thus idly busy rolls their world away:
Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,
For honour forms the social temper here.
Honour, that praise which real merit gains,
Or even imaginary worth obtains,
Here passes current; paid from hand to hand,
It shifts in splendid traffic round the land:
From courts to camps, to cottages it strays,
And all are taught an avarice of praise.
They please, are pleased; they give to get esteem;
Till, seeming blest, they grow to what they seem."

England and the English.

(From *The Traveller.*)

"Fired at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,
And flies where Britain courts the western spring;
Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride,
And brighter streams than famed Hydaspes glide.
There all around the gentlest breezes stray;
There gentle music melts on every spray;
Creation's mildest charms are there combined,
Extremes are only in the master's mind!
Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state,
With daring aims irregularly great;
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of humankind pass by;
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
By forms unfashioned, fresh from nature's hand,
Fierce in their native hardiness of soul,
True to imagined right, above control,
While even the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
And learns to venerate himself as man.

Hydaspes, one of the rivers of the Punjab, a tributary to the Indus, now called the Jelum.

In *The Deserted Village*, of 1770, detail is more carefully dealt with than in *The Traveller*. The simplicity of the language is the means by which it is impressed upon us, without any weary effect. The conclusion of the poem is not so good as the early and the middle part, a result somewhat brought about by a concession to the feelings of the time. *The Deserted Village* still remains as one of the purest and best of English poems.

The following lines are taken from *The Retaliation*. Of Garrick he writes:

"Like an ill-judging beauty, his colours he spread,
And beplastered with rouge his own natural red;
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting,
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting."

Of Edmund Burke he declares that his

> "... Genius was such
> We scarcely can praise it or blame it too much;
> Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
> And to party gave up what was meant for mankind. ...
> Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,
> Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit,
> For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient,
> And too fond of the *right* to pursue the *expedient*.
> In short, 'twas his fate, unemployed or in place, sir,
> To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor."

For Sir Joshua Reynolds came a grand eulogium:

> "Here Reynolds is laid, and to tell you my mind,
> He has not left better or wiser behind.
> His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand;
> His manners were gentle, complying, and bland:
> Still born to improve us in every part;
> His pencil, our faces; his manners, our heart.
> To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,
> When they judged without skill, he was still hard of hearing.
> When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,
> He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff."

(5) Goldsmith's Style and Characteristics.

Oliver Goldsmith was endowed with a nature which endeared him to all his friends, and has made his writings penetrate into his readers' hearts. Awkward in appearance and shy from his anxiety to please, Goldsmith was scorned by the common world; and those who had the gift of perception alone saw his real value. Subsequent generations, who have known him only by his writings, have loved him more dearly still. The sensitiveness of his temperament deprived him of self-consciousness and often made him appear at a disadvantage. The hard world of the eighteenth century misjudged him, and marvelled after his death to learn how great a man he had been.

Johnson, his steadfast friend, was one of the greatest admirers of Goldsmith's capacity. Johnson has too often been looked upon as a coarse pedant, overbearing in manner, and dictatorial in opinions. A real knowledge of him reveals the softness of his heart, while his life is filled with incidents which prove his sympathy. The faults of manner he so often displayed are explained by the fact that he himself was a thorough man, to whom no one was more annoying than a *dilettante*. Knowledge, in Johnson's eyes, was too sacred a thing to be lightly handled or rashly misapplied. Goldsmith sometimes irritated him by appearing to be frivolous, an aspect only caused by his nervous disposition. If Johnson saw that he had unintentionally wounded

Goldsmith, he was always quick to smooth the difference away. On one occasion when they were dining together in some company at mid-day, a slight dispute between them led to a roar from Johnson: "Sir, you are impertinent!" Goldsmith retired in silence and brooded over his wrongs. Some hours afterwards, when they met again at the club, Johnson, wishing to make amends, called in a loud voice across the room, "Doctor Goldsmith, something passed to-day where you and I dined. I ask your pardon." To which Goldsmith placidly answered, "It must be much from you, sir, that I take ill." It would be difficult to find any two men who so clearly understood one another's whims.

Goldsmith's natural faculty was the gift of expressing his thought in the most fitting words. The art was one to which he had given little attention, for he exercised it naturally, without any trouble. The charm and grace which always marked his style appeared in his earliest letters. At the end of his life, after writing for seventeen years, his sentences and paragraphs differed very little from his first compositions. This it is that makes his style so unique in character, and so unattainable by imitation. The effect is produced by the writer's personality, which belonged to Goldsmith, and to Goldsmith alone.

Even his hack-work was never deficient in this respect. "Goldsmith," said Johnson, "will make his Natural History as interesting as a Persian tale." His histories of Greece, Rome, and England, though now valueless in matter, remain models of clear narrative. He had written them for his own pleasure, with all the charm of his style; and there was also present the touch of his own personality, which conveyed to these writings their subtle charm, so easy to feel, so impossible to define. Nowhere does this charm come more clearly than in his delineation of character. His portraits of single characters, half grotesque, wholly pathetic, are as finished and complete as the finest Dutch painting. It was when he sought to make such characters move in complex action that his pictures lose something of their vitality, a flaw showing even in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, where, in other respects, Goldsmith is at his greatest and his best.

"There are a hundred faults in this thing," the author said himself; but they can be readily forgiven for the sake of Goldsmith's sweet sympathies. No passages show this more clearly than those in which the Vicar's home-life is described—the Vicar, a delineation of Oliver's own kind and forgiving father. The book deals with the simplest and most essential forms of human nature, and appeals to the whole of humanity. "It might have been written in any country, and is read all over

the world." Yet this sensitive sympathy carried its punishment with it. Describing himself, he avows that "his sensibility exposes him to the slightest invasion of contempt," and that "his feelings are so exquisitely poignant as to agonise under the slightest disappointment." At the same time, this quality brought him a reward in the pleasure it afforded him by giving him so great a power for gauging the feelings of others. To see distress was, with him, not merely to pity it, but to share it as well, and so to add a hundred-fold to the relief that he was never known to refuse. In the same way that he dealt with living beings, he dealt also with the children of his imagination—the characters of his books. He was Olivia as he was Dr. Primrose; the child, torn with sorrow and shame for an evil-doing; the priest, whose "gentle government and wise blindness" wins back a despairing soul.

"I caught the dear forlorn wretch in my arms. 'Welcome, any way, welcome, my dearest lost one, my treasure, to your poor old father's bosom. Though the vicious forsake thee, there is yet one on earth that will never forsake thee; though thou hadst ten thousand crimes to answer for, he will forget them all.' 'O, my own dear'—for minutes she could do no more—'my own dearest good papa! Could angels be kinder! How do I deserve so much! You can't forgive me. I know you cannot.' 'Yes, my child, from my heart I do forgive thee. Only repent, and we shall both yet be happy.'"

So Goldsmith pleads before us, a great and wonderful artist, a loving and lovable man. Uncouth in his manner; too anxious and vainly self-conscious—though never conceited—he stood in his own light; faithful in his friendships; generous in his impulses; he has won his way to our hearts, not only by the beauty of his work, but by his own charm. We think of him, poor, unhappy, solitary; the best pleasures of life denied him; the constant loneliness of his days ever closing round him. Among all these troubles, we remember his constant kindness, his unfailing sympathy; and we recognise that, whatever his faults, his virtues surpassed them; for charity, in its broadest sense, was the basis of his life; and "the greatest of these is charity.'

73. The Classical Poetry.

(1) The Coming of the Classical Influence.

Didactic work during the Transition period had been greatly strengthened by the writings of Johnson and Goldsmith; and didacticism would probably have enjoyed a longer lease of life had any other writers of equal merit been able to follow. The verses of Blair, Young, and Savage are all marked by didactic theories. Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination*, in 1744, distinctly show the influence of the time of Queen Anne, and

Churchill's *Satires* are eminently the offspring of didactic feeling. But none of these could rival, in any way, the effects produced by *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, *The Traveller*, and *The Deserted Village*; there was an intellectual spirit in Johnson's poems, and an emotional one in Goldsmith's, with which the end of the century could not compete.

A previous chapter showed that the natural English love for the country and for nature had never been extinguished, though it was overshadowed for a while by the example of Pope and his followers. Before the time of Pope, Milton and Marvel had written with a knowledge of rustic conditions; and Thomson's *Seasons*, issued during the most successful part of Pope's career—1726 to 1730—did still more to keep up a healthier condition of the English mind. Thomson's work was continued by Dyer, Goldsmith, the Wartons, and Beattie; Goldsmith extending the field by his descriptions of foreign lands.

The most important influence, therefore, in the middle of the century was one not affecting the bulk of the nation, but only those who were trained in the classics. Pope had attempted, and succeeded, to cultivate a correct form. William Collins and Thomas Gray insisted upon the necessity for beauty as well as finish. For this they had accepted as masters the great poets of the ancients, and did not overlook the Italian poets, among whom Petrarch was most prominent. The poetry of all these men was the product of "genius, restrained by art."

Collins and Gray, therefore, occupy a special place by themselves in the history of English literature. Collins was a lyrist; Gray an elegiac poet, with a mind more cultured, yet not so inspired as that of his predecessor. The *Odes* of Collins, his best poems, came from him unconsciously; Gray's work was the result of long and careful training, helped, and even made possible, by the possession of a sensitive and accurate ear. His poetry is the production of a highly cultivated and receptive mind; Collins' poetry is the outcome of natural powers.

(2) William Collins.

William Collins was born at Chichester in 1721. His father was occupied by trade in the old city, a method of livelihood to which he had been driven by misfortune, for the family was of good blood. He was apparently a well-to-do man in his boy's younger days, for William was sent to Winchester, and afterwards to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he came into contact with Johnson, and a warm friendship grew up between them.

While he was an undergraduate he printed his *Persian Eclogues* and *An Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer*, who had just completed an edition of Shakspere. In this Epistle Collins traced the

history of poetry in Europe; and, after speaking of the coming of Shakspere and the merits of his work, continued in some interesting lines to criticise one or two of Shakspere's successors. He lamented that in spite of the brilliancy of Shakspere no one had ever been his equal.

"Yet ah! so bright her morning's opening ray,
In vain our Britain hop'd an equal day;
No second growth the western isle could bear,
At once exhausted with too rich a year.
Too nicely Jonson knew the critic's part;
Nature in him was almost lost in art.
Of softer mould the gentle Fletcher came,
The next in order, as the next in name;
With pleas'd attention, 'midst his scenes we find
Each glowing thought, that warms the female mind;
Each melting sigh, and ev'ry tender tear,
The lover's wishes, and the virgin's fear.
His every strain the Smiles and Graces own;
But stronger Shakspere felt for man alone:
Drawn by his pen, our ruder passions stand,
Th' unrivall'd picture of his early hand."

Collins thought of entering either the army or the church, but he was afflicted with melancholia, and had suddenly to leave his college. He went to London in 1746, being then about twenty-four years old, and printed his *Odes* in a small pamphlet of three sheets and a half. Collins was arrested for debt, probably by the Oxford tradesmen; but the London booksellers, who were inclined to be kind to him, released him from his difficulties; and by a fortunate legacy soon after, his troubles were allayed. The *Odes*, suffering a bad sale, were unsuccessful; and with his own hands, Collins destroyed what had been left of the edition. At about this time he received great pleasure from his acquaintance with William Thomson, author of *The Seasons*, who was personally one of the most genial and popular of men. On Thomson's death in 1748 Collins wrote a charming elegy or ode in his memory. The scene of the poem was laid at Richmond, where Thomson had lived for many years.

"In yon deep bed of whisp'ring reeds
His airy harp shall now be laid,
That he, whose heart in sorrow bleeds,
May love through life the soothing shade.

"Then maids and youths shall linger here,
And while its sounds at distance swell,
Shall sadly seem in Pity's ear
To hear the woodland pilgrim's knell.

"Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,
And oft suspend the dashing oar
To bid his gentle spirit rest! . . .

"But thou, lorn stream, whose sullen tide
No sedge-crowned Sisters now attend,
Now waft me from the green hill's side,
Whose cold turf hides the buried friend!

"And see, the fairy valleys fade,
Dim Night has veil'd the solemn view;
Yet once again, dear parted shade,
Meek Nature's child, again adieu!"

In the following year, when he was only twenty-eight, he felt his ailment to be increasing; and went back to Chichester, where he wrote a little more, though unfortunately these later poems have not been preserved. The state of his health grew worse, and he crossed the Channel, for a visit to France and Flanders, in the hope that his malady might be mitigated by the change. It seemed only to make him worse, and he had to return. In 1754, while staying with some friends, it was necessary to remove him to an asylum for a time, and afterwards, hopelessly insane, he was taken to his sister's house in Chichester, where five years later he died.

His *Odes* may be regarded from several points of view, for they are by no means all of one kind: some suffer from a touch of inequality, others are sustained throughout. The most charming are those in which Collins' heart speaks freely and naturally. The *Ode to Simplicity*, in which he prays to be granted the gift of sweet and simple expression, is a beautiful example of his work in this manner:

"O Thou by Nature taught
To breathe her genuine thought,
In numbers warmly pure and sweetly strong:
Who first on mountains wild,
In Fancy, loveliest child,
Thy babe and Pleasure's, nurs'd the powers of song!

"Thou, who with hermit heart
Disdain'st the wealth of art,
And gauds, and pageant weeds, and trailing pall;
But com'st a decent maid,
In Attic robe array'd,
O chaste, unboastful nymph, to thee I call!

"By all the honey'd store
Of Hybla's thymy shore,
By all her blooms and mingled murmurs dear,
By her, whose love-lorn woe
In evening musings flow,
Sooth'd sweetly sad Electra's poet's ear:

Hybla's thymy shore, a mountain in Sicily where odoriferous flowers of all kinds grew in abundance. It was famous for bees and honey.

Sad Electra's poet. Electra was daughter of Agamemnon, King of Argos. Sophocles, the Greek dramatist, wrote his famous tragedy upon her sorrows.

"By old Cephisus deep,
Who spread his wavy sweep
In warbled wanderings round thy green retreat,
On whose enamel'd side,
When holy Freedom died,
No equal haunt allur'd thy future feet. . . .

"Of these let others ask,
To aid some mighty task,
I only seek to find thy temperate vale:
Where oft my reed might sound
To maids and shepherds round,
And all thy sons, O Nature, learn my tale."

Old Cephisus, a celebrated river of Greece which rose in Phocis and passed Mount Parnassus. The Graces were very fond of this river.

The contrasts to be found in Collins' work are nowhere more clearly marked than by the difference which exists between the *Ode to Simplicity* and the *Ode to Liberty*. The first, full of exquisite expression and clear reasoning, with thought which is beautiful on account of its simplicity, is so far above the vague ideas in the second, that it seems impossible to believe they both were the work of the same hand. It is said that Collins was attracted by Republican theories—a weakness dimly expressed in the *Ode to Liberty*, and probably brought about by the diseased condition of his brain.

The *Ode to Pity* has been described as having a melody like to the playing of a flute. The poet calls to Pity to come away from those ancient times when the poet Euripides aroused her to help the weary, and to give assistance to the sufferers of modern days:

". . . Long, Pity, let the nations view
Thy sky-worn robes of tenderest blue
And eyes of dewy light!

"But wherefore need I wander wide
To old Ilissus' distant side,
Deserted stream, and mute?
Wild Arun, too, has heard thy strains,
And Echo, midst thy native plains,
Been sooth'd by Pity's lute.

"There first the wren thy myrtles shed
On gentlest Otway's infant head,
To him thy cell was shown;
And while he sung the female heart
With youth's soft notes unspoil'd by art,
Thy turtles mix'd their own."

Ilissus, a small river of Attica, on whose banks was a temple sacred to the Muses. Arun, a river in Sussex.

Otway, the dramatist, author of *The Orphan*, a touching tragedy in blank verse, and *Venice Preserved*. Born in Midhurst, Sussex. Died of starvation in London in 1685.

In the *Ode on Manners*, a light and graceful specimen of his work, Collins speaks of how Fancy will grant us visions of all things if only we demand them of her:

". . . As Fancy breathes her potent spell,
Not vain she finds the charmful task
In pageant quaint, in motley mask,
Behold, before her musing eyes,
The countless manners round her rise;
While ever varying as they pass,
To some Contempt applies her glass;
With these the white-rob'd maids combine,
And those the laugh'ng Satyrs join!
But who is he whom now she views
In robe of wild contending hues?
Thou, by the Passions nursed, I greet
The comic sock that binds thy feet!
O Humour, thou whose name is known
To Britain's favoured isle alone;
Me too amidst thy band admit;
There where the young-eyed healthful Wit,
(Whose jewels in his crisped hair
Are placed each other's beams to share,
Whom no delights from thee divide,)
In laughter loos'd, attends thy side!"

Collins wrote *The Dirge in Cymbeline* shortly before he had to give up all attempt at composition, but they plainly show what an advance he made in his mastery over versification.

"To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each opening sweet, of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing spring.

"No wailing ghost shall dare appear
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove,
But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

"No wither'd witch shall here be seen,
No goblins lead their nightly crew;
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew.

"The redbreast oft at evening hours
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss and gather'd flowers,
To deck the ground where thou art laid."

A curious piece of criticism that has appeared with regard to Collins' work is best refuted by a consideration of the most well-known of all his odes, and one full of his charming phrases. The critic declared that Collins "had no love of Nature for its own sake." The answer is best found in the poem itself.

Ode to Evening.

" If aught of oaten stop or pastoral song
May hope, O pensive Eve, to soothe thine ear,
Like thy own brawling springs,
Thy springs and dying gales;

" O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired Sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

" Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat,
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

" As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

" Whose numbers stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return!

" For when thy folding star arising shews
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and elves
Who slept in buds the day,

" And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and lovelier still,
The pensive pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car;

" Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene,
Or find some ruin 'midst its dreary dells,
Whose walls more awful nod
By thy religious gleams.

" Or if chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut
That from the mountain's side
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

" And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

Oaten stop, a musical pipe, made out of oat straw. A word now obsolete; used by Milton. **Brede**, braid.
Folding star, the star whose rising indicates that it is time to put the flocks into their folds. **Paly**, slightly pale.

" While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

" While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

" So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, smiling Peace,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And love thy favourite name!"

(3) Thomas Gray.

Thomas Gray was one of the very few poets who have been able to lead a life of leisure and cultured ease. His father, a scrivener in London, lived in the city, and Gray was born in Cornhill on the 26th of November, 1716.

His father was sufficiently well-to-do to send him to Eton, where he and Horace Walpole, the youngest son of the famous Sir Robert, became great friends. In 1734 he entered at Peterhouse, in Cambridge, and does not seem to have cared for any of the ways of university life. As he intended to take up common law, he had no need of sitting for a university degree; and after four years' lectures and keeping of terms, he left Cambridge. In his undergraduate days he had begun to write Latin verse, and at the time that he quitted Cambridge he was able to translate the Greek and Latin poets into sound and effective English verse..

His Eton friend, Walpole, then asked him to come upon a tour through France and Italy, which lasted for nearly three years, and has been pleasantly described in Gray's letters. The Alps made a great impression upon Gray, and taught him the magnificence of mountains. Up to the middle of the eighteenth century few Englishmen, save the wealthy ones, had travelled on the continent; and the liking for nature had been confined to the more sober charms of the English country-side. The poetry of England had hardly dealt with mountain or forest scenes, and Gray's experiences stood him in good stead.

After a cheerful companionship of more than two years, Gray and Walpole went through the usual finish of a too long journey. At Florence, in 1741, a quarrel broke out between them, so they separated, and each went home by himself. Two months after Gray's return his father died; and the family matters proving to be considerably involved, he went back to Cambridge in the winter of 1742 and took up his residence again at Peterhouse.

Gray's beginning as a poet belonged to this same year. The Odes *To Spring*, *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, and *To Adversity* were then all written, and the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* was begun. For the five years following he devoted himself to the study of the classics, and in 1747 produced his delightful *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat*. His life at Cambridge then became less lonely by a friendship with a scholar of St. John's, who subsequently wrote his biography. In 1750 the *Elegy* was finished, and three years afterwards *Six Poems* were published, and another period of his poetical life began.

The year 1754 saw *The Progress of Poesy*, modelled upon the methods of Pindar. A second Pindaric Ode, *The Liberty of Genius*, was never completed. A third, *The Bard*, which had been begun in 1754, was finished in 1757. In this last year the Pindaric Odes were published, and Gray, recognised as a great poet, was offered the Laureateship, on the death of Colley Cibber.

His attention was next turned to Celtic and Icelandic poetry, which led to the writing of the *Fatal Sisters* and the *Descent of Odin*. He died at Pembroke College in 1771, and was buried beside the grave of his mother at Stoke-Pogis, the spot which he had made famous in his *Elegy*.

The poems of Gray, though few in number, have merits which raise him to the position of being our chief poet between Pope and Wordsworth. Gray, in his early work, was himself greatly indebted to Milton; Wordsworth was infinitely more indebted to Gray. The Odes that Gray wrote as a young man were stiff and wanting in freedom; and it is interesting to follow the course of their production, to observe how, by constant care and leisurely treatment, Gray steadily improved the methods of his work. He was conscious of his own powers, but did not at first know how to use them to advantage. The five years that elapsed between the *Ode on the Spring* and the other on *The Death of a Favourite Cat* show a most remarkable increase of ease in writing. Gray, no doubt, was largely helped by the kindly feeling he extended to every living creature, which allowed his hand to work the better, when his heart directed it, rather than his head.

Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes.

"'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers, that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima, reclined,
Gazed on the lake below. . . .

"Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream;
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
Thro' richest purple to the view
Betrayed a golden gleam.

"The hapless Nymph with wonder saw;
A whisker first and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretched in vain to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What cat's averse to fish?

"Presumptuous Maid! with looks intent
Again she stretched, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between;
(Malignant Fate sat by, and smiled)
The slipp'ry verge her feet beguiled,
She tumbled headlong in. . . .

"From hence, ye Beauties, undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes
And heedless hearts is lawful prize,
Nor all, that glisters, gold."

It must be borne in mind that the year 1742 was the year of other poems which were much more effective than the *Ode on the Spring*. The *Hymn to Adversity*, perhaps, stands on a not much higher level than this, but the *Ode to Eton College*, written in 1742, and not published for five years, and the *Elegy*, begun also in 1742, and not finished for eight years, all show a very different treatment. The opening of the *Ode to Eton College* is particularly effective:

Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College.

"Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the watry glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her HENRY'S holy shade;
And ye, that from the stately brow
Of WINDSOR'S heights th' expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way.

"Ah, happy hills, ah, pleasing shade,
Ah, fields beloved in vain,
Where once my careless childhood strayed,
A stranger yet to pain!

I feel the gales, that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring."

The value of the *Elegy* is far more than that of the *Ode*. Its meditations in a country churchyard, and its thoughts, aroused by the number of those who lie buried in its graves, are different in nature, wiser in feeling, and better expressed in verse. It represents the best work done under the influence of Thomson, while showing the finish demanded by the didactic school, with a few of the distinguishing features of the Romantic method. Gray admitted that he never wrote without reading Spenser for a considerable time, and much of the manner and melody of the *Faerie Quene* may be traced in the *Elegy*. The following stanzas, by reason of their finished simplicity, mark one of the sweetest passages in the poem. The result is attained by Gray's selection of simple words and an ever-changing rhyme.

The Graves of the Poor.

"Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

"The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

"For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

"Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke! . . .

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

"Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhimes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

"Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

"For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind?

"On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires."

The second period of Gray's work begins with the *Progress of Poesy* in 1754, a Pindaric Ode very elaborate in its form. The last division of this Ode, which speaks of the poets of England, illustrates many of its special features. Gray paid no heed to Chaucer, Spenser, or Pope; Shakspere, Milton, and Dryden in his eyes were the most important.

III. 1.

"Far from the sun and summer-gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon strayed,
To him the mighty Mother did unveil
Her awful face. The dauntless child
Stretched forth his little arms and smiled.
'This pencil take,' she said, 'whose colours clear
Richly paint the vernal year:
Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!
This can unlock the gates of Joy;
Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic Tears.'

III. 2.

"Nor second he that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secrets of the abyss to spy.
He passed the flaming bounds of Place and Time:
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,
Where angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Behold where Dryden's less presumptuous car,
Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear
Two Coursers of ethereal race,
With neck in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.

III. 3.

"Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.
But ah! 'tis heard no more.—

Nature's darling, Shakspere. Second he, Milton. The mighty Mother, Nature.

Oh! lyre divine, what daring spirit
Wakes thee now? though he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban eagle bear
Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air:
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray
With orient hues, unborrowed of the Sun;
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great."

The Theban eagle, Pindar, the lyric poet of Thebes in Boeotia.

The Bard, another Pindaric Ode on similar lines, was begun in 1755, and then laid aside until two years later. In August of 1757 the *Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard* were published together, with the modest title of *Odes by Mr. Gray*. *The Bard* was founded on the tradition popular in Wales that Edward the First ordered all the bards who had fallen into his hands to be put to death. When Edward marched, for the first time, down the "steep of Snowdon's shaggy side," an aged poet suddenly appeared from behind a rock with a lyre in his hand, and chanting to his instrument, pronounced doom upon the king. Then followed a terrible curse to fall upon all generations of Edward's descendants, and the prophecy that Wales would regain the sovereignty over England. This, he foretold, was to be accomplished by the accession of the Tudors, so the Ode concluded with a prophetic description of Elizabeth; and the poet, with a parting curse upon Edward, cast himself into the mountain torrent, and was drowned. These lines declare how Elizabeth would hold her court:

". . Gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
In bearded majesty, appear.
In the midst a form divine!
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line
Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face
Attempered sweet to virgin-grace.
What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
What strains of vocal transport round her play!
Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear;
They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright Rapture calls, and, as she soaring sings,
Waves in the eye of Heav'n her many-coloured wings."

Taliessin, chief of the Welsh bards, who flourished in the sixth century.

Gray was described by one of the best scholars of his time as being "perhaps the most learned man in Europe." The strength

of his English verse lay in the fact that his knowledge of Greek poetry was not only wide but penetrative. He realised the hidden meanings of the great Greek Odes better than any of his contemporaries, who complained of the difficulties that they met with when they read *The Bard* and the *Progress of Poesy*. It was never Gray's intention they should belong to simple poetry of the ballad kind. They were to be admired for the manner of their construction; for the beauty of their strophes, with its balanced and echoing music; and for the art with which difficult themes were thoroughly worked out, while excess was never permitted. Gray's own words testified to his intentions: "The style I have aimed at is extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical."

74. The Development of Prose. (1) Prose Fiction.

(1) Samuel Richardson (1689-1761).

It was almost the middle of the eighteenth century when the genuine novel appeared, which gave a study of ordinary human life as it is, and developed groups of circumstances into plots. Samuel Richardson, the son of a joiner, in 1740 produced his *Pamela*, a real novel; and established fiction in English prose.

In 1706, he was apprenticed to a London printer, and had the advantage of corresponding with some well-to-do person, whom he regarded as "a master of the epistolary style." When his apprenticeship was finished, he worked for six years as a compositor and corrector for the press; and then, marrying his employer's daughter, went into business for himself in a court off Fleet Street.

He was a steady and respectable man, and of such ability that the booksellers employed him to write prefaces for some of the books they published. Two of them, Rivington and Osborne, asked him to put together a volume of *Familiar Letters*, which their country customers might find useful to take as models, if they were written in a plain and simple style.

Richardson thought that this would be a good opportunity for using a tale that he had heard some years before, and letting it appear in book-form as a series of letters. He was moved with an honest hope of being able to warn young country women of the dangers they would be exposed to in coming up alone to a great city like London. The book, written in two months, was issued in 1740 under the title of *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*.

Richardson made his heroine the daughter of honest people in humble circumstances, and named her after one famous

Perspicuous, capable of being clearly understood.

Pamela of Sidney's *Arcadia*. Pamela is described as becoming housemaid to the widow of a country squire, who lives at the Hall until her young son comes of age, and can be his father's successor. The lad falls in love with the attractive Pamela, until she suffers a great deal of annoyance from his undesirable attentions. Pamela, however, has the keener wit; and after two volumes of agonies, during which she threatens to throw herself in a pond, and does not do it, she secures him as her husband, and becomes Mrs. B. Richardson did not better his position by following up *Pamela* with a sequel in two volumes; for he was then deservedly satirised by Henry Fielding.

Richardson devoted the next few years of his life to the production of a still longer book than *Pamela*—the story of *Clarissa Harlowe*. This was told in a series of letters, extending to seven volumes. The story was a sad one—of the love affairs of Clarissa, who was deeply attached to Sir Robert Lovelace. In the misery that followed, she took the unwise step of leaving her home, and asking Sir Robert for assistance. He behaved treacherously to her, and she refused his offer of marriage, to die of a broken heart. Lovelace was then killed in a duel by Colonel Morden, one of Clarissa's relations.

Richardson's third and last novel appeared in 1753. A great number of his female admirers had expressed their devotion to Lovelace; Richardson, in return, overwhelming them with reproaches. They answered in defence that he had given them no one else to love; and Richardson proposed, in a new book, to draw a picture of the man who seemed to him to be ideal. They joyfully accepted his offer, and waited for their hero.

The hero when he came, in the person of Sir Charles Grandison, was a mass of impossibilities. Drawn in a manner meant to be dignified, he was made merely ridiculous. Two heroines were introduced, each of whom was supposed to be in love with him. He was described as adoring them both, and the one who did not succeed in marrying him went mad. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was Fielding's cousin, was furious that a writer of fiction should produce so vulgar a travesty.

If Richardson had been wise enough to confine his novels to scenes of the life he had taken part in, and had not tried to imagine a world he did not know, his plots and characters might have remained almost the same; and probably would then have left, for the amusement of subsequent generations, a true picture of certain aspects in his times. As it is, his Pamelas and Gaffer Andrews could never have existed, and his attempts to delineate great people were dreary misrepresentations.

(2) Henry Fielding (1707-1754).

The Fieldings were descendants of the Counts of Hapsburg an ancient German family, who settled in England during the reign of Edward the Second. Sir William Fielding, the first Earl of Denbigh, died from a wound received in the Civil War; one of his great-great-grandchildren was the Rev. John Fielding, Doctor of Divinity, Canon of Salisbury, and Chaplain to William the Third. Doctor Fielding's grandson was Henry Fielding, the greatest of English novelists, and a man with a wide knowledge of human nature.

Henry Fielding, born in 1707, was educated at Eton and the University of Leyden, where he studied civil law, till his father was unable to support him there any longer. At twenty he had to leave Leyden, and live as best he could with only an uncertain allowance. He returned to London and began to write for the stage, and for years led a hard and difficult life. At some part of this time he was one of the players at Bartholomew Fair. In this there was nothing derogatory, for the Fair was one of the great annual festivities, and all the London theatres were closed, in order that the actors might visit the Fair, and perform to the multitudes. Fielding probably went through far worse experiences when, with a friend, some time later, he kept a booth in the George Inn Yard.

1735 was the year of his wedding, and the young couple, despite their poverty, lived happily in London lodgings. For the next few years his struggles were very hard; but he did well enough to take a theatre, and produced a successful play. The Licensing Act then broke up his company, so he entered as a student of the Middle Temple, and was called to the bar in 1740.

Two years later Fielding published a remarkable novel. Like many others he had been provoked at the misrepresentations in Richardson's *Pamela*; and as in that an innocent housemaid had been eulogised, so in *Joseph Andrews* a modest footman was held up for admiration. Joseph was declared to be the son of old Gaffer Andrews and Pamela's brother. Then, as Pamela after her marriage had never been spoken of by Richardson in any other way than "Mrs. B.," Fielding asserted that this was the initial of her husband's surname, and that the young couple were really Squire and Mrs. Booby. This theory exasperated Richardson beyond endurance. Fielding, however, soon found that five chapters were quite enough for a parody of *Pamela*; and, growing interested in the work, he put out all his power, and turned his story into a brilliant comedy of human life. The book was issued under the title of *The History of Joseph Andrews*

and of his friend, Mr. Abraham Adams. In Adams, Fielding drew a charming picture of a learned but simple-minded clergyman with a pure heart and odd manners. He really is the hero of the book, and Fielding, through him, speaks much of his own views and respect for religion. At the end of the book Fielding could not refrain from going back to the original of Pamela, of whom Joseph Andrews was supposed to be a brother. To Richardson's indignation Joseph was now declared to be no relation of Gaffer Andrews, but the son of "persons of much greater circumstances."

A year after the publication of *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding collected a mass of his writings, issuing them under the name of *Miscellanies.* The first two volumes contained some excellent work in poems and essays and a powerful unfinished satire, *A Journey from this World to the Next.* The third volume was the novel of *Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great.* The story, which was entirely fictitious, professed to be the life of a criminal who had been executed in Newgate, and was intended as a reproof to the many dangerous biographies which bestowed praise on unworthy persons. He showed that writing could be made bad use of in the histories of notorious ruffians. The book revealed a wonderful knowledge of the dark side of London life; for Fielding's years of poverty and want had taught him many bitter lessons.

After the publication of the *Miscellanies*, Fielding made the acquaintance of Lord Lyttelton, who appointed him Justice of the Peace at Westminster. Lord Lyttelton then suggested to Fielding the theme which runs through *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*; and this remarkable book, by many critics called the greatest of novels, appeared in six volumes during the year 1749. A multitude of characters passes through each volume, all drawn with brilliant skill, perfectly natural, like living beings; a wonderful description of the types of women and men to be found in England at the middle of the eighteenth century.

The real meaning of Fielding's work is often mistaken, or even misunderstood. What he aimed at in all his novels was the exposure of insincerity, and the condemnation of falsehood. While in *Joseph Andrews* he began by scoffing at affectation, in *Tom Jones* his lash was kept for those who were knowingly insincere. His mind, acute and forgiving, was quick to recognise any touch of goodness, but flamed fiercely at the least appearance of guile.

The tale was founded on the unchanging features of human character. A genuinely good man was depicted in Allworthy, who is first shown as walking on his garden terrace early in a May morning, thinking of what kind action he could do that

day. "In the full blaze of his majesty uprose the sun, in which one object alone in this lower creation could be more glorious, and that Mr. Allworthy himself presented—a human being replete with benevolence, meditating in what manner he might render himself acceptable to his Creator, by doing good to His creatures."

In contrast with Allworthy are Tom Jones and Blifil, the two boys whom the good man had adopted and brought up. One is amiable to all; the other to nobody but himself. Tom is generous by nature; and, though reckless and impatient of control, is never false. We trust in him because we see that he is true. Blifil hides his falsity under a pretence of proper living. He keeps the bad side of his life secret, and earns our hatred because we know that he is false.

Fielding, with his picture of Sophia, draws a delightful study of a natural girl, with a sweet and forgiving disposition, and no foolish ideas as to her own importance. Some of the most delicate touches in the book show how Tom, by every one of his misdeeds, brings his punishment upon himself, since each of them removes him further and further from Sophia. Then the just and generous spirit of Fielding reveals itself; and making Tom repent and honestly strive to recover his lost ground, he enables Sophia to realise that Tom is worthy not only of pity, but of forgiveness.

Fielding acknowledged, with all gratitude, how much he owed to Cervantes; and Thackeray, in his turn, gratefully admitted his own indebtedness to Fielding. His characters are not the puppets of Richardson, jerking through their parts as the writer pulls the strings. They are studies of living men and women, dealt with in a manner that only Shakspere had shown before; and Fielding, by his genius, brought it for the first time into English fiction. His books were real; his characters were real; there was a sense of truth and of honour running through the whole.

He published his last novel, *Amelia*, in 1751, for which he received a thousand pounds. The story was a song of praise in honour of true womanhood. In this respect it appealed more to Thackeray than any other portion of Fielding's writing.

Fielding worked hard on his magistrate's bench; in 1749, as chairman of the Middlesex Sessions, delivering an address to the Grand Jury dealing seriously with the needless crime of the community; and two years later published an inquiry into the causes of crime, which led to an Act for restraining the sale of spirits. Fielding was always a staunch friend to the poor, whose life he knew so well in many ways; and his comparatively early death deprived a great city of one of her best friends. In

1752, he became a confirmed invalid; and attempting to regain strength by a visit to Portugal, lived only for two months after his arrival in Lisbon.

He died, aged forty-eight, in October, 1754; his cousin, Lady Mary, to whom he had always been deeply attached, surviving him for eight years.

(3) Tobias Smollett (1721-1771).

Tobias Smollett was an excellent novelist of his time, though he ranked far below Fielding. He was brought up by his grandfather, Sir James Smollett, at the family place in Dumbartonshire, and received an excellent education; but on the death of Sir James in 1740, he was found to be left without any provision. It became necessary for him to take a post as surgeon's mate on board a man-of-war; and on leaving the fleet, settled in Jamaica, where he married Miss Nancy Lascelles, a young lady of fortune. After many wonderful adventures, he returned to London in 1744 seeking to practise as a doctor, and to work at literature. Before long he was compelled by his necessities to live in a garret.

In 1748 he published his first novel, *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, a strange tale of the hardships and miseries of the sea, and of curious scenes of life in London. It is full of hearty animal spirits, but is coarse and rough in both matter and manner. The *Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, in 1751, is not much better. The hero can be no more admired than Roderick, and the story is singularly unequal. The characters of both books have become famous, for they are full of humour, though wit and pathos are wanting.

Smollett then undertook a task for which he was not fitted—the writing of a complete *History of England*. He attempted it with perfect confidence, and when dealing with the affairs of his own time, treated them as if they were the material of a novel. This, however, made his *History* readable, and for a time he became famous. In the finish of the work his health broke down entirely. His mind was affected, and his doctors insisted upon his going to Italy. He spent two years on the continent, a time troubled with much unhappiness; and his *Travels in France and Italy* is not one of his best books.

His life dragged on for five or six years longer, and he went again to the Mediterranean. At Leghorn he suddenly seemed better. The brain-power returned to him, and just before his death he wrote and published the *Expedition of Humphrey Clinker*, regarded as the best of all his tales. It is a quaint and effective record of the travels of Mr. Bramble, who wanders over England and Scotland to many watering-places in search of

health. Mr. Bramble's sister, Tabitha, is a celebrated character in fiction. Smollett did not then write ferociously, as in his other tales; he showed instead a fellow-feeling for mankind.

He died at the age of fifty, at Leghorn, in 1771.

Humphrey Clinker denotes a remarkable change in Smollett's mind. Two of his books, which came after the time of *Peregrine Pickle*, were nearly worthless, and indicated a complete failure of his power. One of these was the *Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves*, an exaggerated and unpleasant satire. The other was the *Adventures of an Atom*, a virulent book mocking both parties in English politics. Had Smollett been always able to work as he did in *Humphrey Clinker* his reputation would have stood higher; but the constant worry and trouble of poverty was possibly more than he could meet without distress. He is to be pitied and not blamed for the extravagances of his books. The strange episodes he introduces were records of his own experiences, and these experiences were brought about by the necessities of a hard and weary life.

(4) Fielding and Smollett.

These two great novelists have had their names so closely linked by generations subsequent to their lives that they are often regarded as being similar to one another, and as occupying exactly the same position in the world of novelists. It is necessary to notice a few points in connection with both, to see if this view can be accepted as accurate.

The first thing to be realised with regard to Fielding is the manliness of his character, which shows itself in his constant writing against evil dispositions. There is not a page in his books where his delineation of character does not always uphold that which is true and brave, and bring into ridicule its cowardly and untrustworthy opposite. Smollett, perhaps unconsciously, often draws the character of a reprobate without displaying by any other method his disapprobation for the ill-doer; and in this respect Smollett's nature reveals itself as being coarse and rough. Fielding and Smollett had the merit of avoiding the errors into which Richardson fell. They never attempted to describe scenes or characters unless they had some personal knowledge of them; and Dickens, who owed so much to Smollett, had never the skill to follow his master's example.

With regard to humour they did not stand exactly side by side. Each had a genuine love for it, and Fielding possessed an additional gift of adding a tender feeling to all his jests. Smollett's humour was more rollicking in its character; and while he drew many vigorous studies, keen and clear in execution, he could never quite rise to the height of Fielding by the

portrayal of Allworthys or Parson Adams. Yet, even with such small differences, they are very nearly on the same level, and will always be regarded as in the first rank of the writers of English fiction.

(5) The Rev. Laurence Sterne (1713-1768).

Sterne holds a unique position among the English humorists. No writer of his kind had ever preceded him; no one resembling him has ever appeared since his death. The special features of his books are probably due to the fact that he was an unconscionable plagiarist. His work is a medley of matter taken from all kinds of different authors; yet Sterne, by handling his pilferings with a peculiar touch, contrived to convey the idea that they were his original writing.

He did not begin literary work until well on in middle age; the best years of his life, from thirty to fifty, were spent in silence and obscurity. In spite of these drawbacks he produced two famous books during his last seven years, and when their workmanship and their wit and wisdom are taken into account, it is difficult to trace the beginnings that led to so brilliant a result.

The days of his childhood and youth are, in this respect, more understandable than the days of his manhood. As a boy he was subjected to the roughest experiences. His father, a captain in a marching regiment, had to be constantly upon the move. From the autumn of 1714, when Sterne was about a twelve-month old, the family did not know for eleven years what it was to have a settled home. The result was the death of several of Captain Sterne's children; and though Laurence survived, the hardships of these early days brought on the disorder which eventually caused his death. When he was about ten years old, his uncle, who had some interest in Yorkshire, sent him for eight years to the Halifax Grammar School. In his nineteenth year he obtained a sizarship at Jesus College, Cambridge, where his great-grandfather had been Master; and in Cambridge he remained until 1736.

Of the influences brought to bear upon him during his early life, the most important was that of his father, whom he described in the following passage, and took as a model for Uncle Toby: "My father was a little smart man, active to the last degree in all exercises, most patient of fatigues and disappointments, of which it pleased God to give him full measure. He was in his temper somewhat rapid and hasty, but of a kindly sweet disposition, void of all design; and so innocent in his own intentions that he suspected no one, so that you might have cheated him ten times in a day, if nine had not been sufficient

for your purpose." Of his school-days no record remains, except one story of the headmaster's prophecy of his fame. Of his university career nothing is known, except his friendship with a fellow undergraduate, John Hall, a distant kinsman.

The influence of the two young men upon one another seems to have been very strong, and not at all for their good. The connection between them continued long after their Cambridge days. Hall, succeeding to a property, became Hall-Stevenson, and master of Skelton Castle, while within a few miles of Skelton lay Sutton-in-the-Forest, where Sterne was inducted as vicar in 1738.

The next twenty years of Sterne's life were passed in this retired spot. "Books, painting, fiddling, and shooting," he says, were his relaxations. Books he could obtain in plenty at Skelton, where Hall-Stevenson formed a large and curious library, many volumes of which were congenial to their owner's and Sterne's peculiar tastes. Of music and the arts he does not seem to have had more than an amateur's knowledge; and from sport he was cut off, partly by reason of his cloth, and partly by his delicate health. His gun was always possible, and kept him in touch with the country-side. Sterne was appointed a prebend of York Minster, and in the same year, 1741, he married. He was unhappy in this marriage, thinking that he was always misunderstood. It is possible that his wife was the model for Mrs. Shandy, in which case their relations would inevitably have been strained. Sterne, in his writings a sentimentalist, was never in heart a man of feeling. An estrangement betweeen husband and wife became inevitable, and existed for some years before Sterne emerged into fame.

Beginning to write *Tristram Shandy* in the early part of 1759, Sterne completed the first two volumes in a few months, and had them published in York. They became known in London, where they gained so immediate a success that Sterne hurried to town in the spring of the following year to be at once declared the pet of the London season. He wrote home, "The honours paid me were the greatest that ever came from the great." By the end of the year the third and fourth volumes were ready, and on their publication in January, 1761, Sterne was again fêted and feasted, and the first half of the year was one long triumph. In the summer Sterne had to return to his vicarage, and his troubles began with the breaking out of the disease which ultimately caused his death. In 1762 life seemed intolerable; and, after publishing two more volumes, he hastened to France.

In Paris he was gladly received by the circle of the philosophic salons. After a happy stay of six months, his wife and

daughter joined him, and the family moved down to Toulouse. Sterne returned to England in 1764, when in the autumn a weariness of spirit fell on him again, and constant change from his country surroundings was the only thing that kept him alive. He summoned up enough courage to continue his work, and many sketches of French life were incorporated with *Tristram* to form the seventh volume. This and the eighth volume, where the Widow Wadman first appears, contain many chapters in Sterne's best manner. In 1765 he set out on another foreign tour, the result being *The Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, a book showing a strong influence of French thought and expression. By the end of June Sterne was back in Yorkshire, and settled down in the winter on a last volume of *Tristram*; being, according to his own account, "liked the best of all." The *Sentimental Journey* was published in 1768, and in March of the same year Sterne died.

To analyse *Tristram Shandy* is impossible—it is the "very essence of the book to defy analysis." The full title is *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.*; but it is difficult to know which of the two subjects it says less about—the opinions of Shandy, or the events of his life. It is rich in whimsical humour, and remarkable for its contempt of conventions.

The birth of Tristram does not occur until the third volume, and he only passes from childhood to boyhood in the sixth. The seventh brings him in as a mere shadow; the last two do not mention him at all. The real heroes of the book are Mr. Shandy, senior, and Uncle Toby.

Volumes one and two are taken up with studies of Mr. and Mrs. Shandy and of the Rev. Mr. Yorick, Sterne's portraiture of himself. Uncle Toby, Mr. Shandy's brother, an old soldier, and Corporal Trim, his servant, are introduced, lightly at first, but growing stronger as Sterne got conscious of his power. In the first volume are brilliant and witty sketches of certain individuals; in the second, these sketches are endowed with life. The third and fourth volumes are the least satisfactory, for they are tainted with a Rabelaisian vein, though this fault is almost excused in the fourth volume by a famous discussion of Mr. Shandy and Uncle Toby. The fifth and sixth volumes are infinitely better; the first with many humorous passages, and the second with the celebrated dialogue between Mr. and Mrs. Shandy on the question as to whether their little son, Tristram, should be breeched or not. This volume also contains the pathetic episode of the death of Le Fevre.

It is difficult by description to convey any idea of Sterne's method. Hardly any place in it is found for the ordinary points common to English prose. Sterne never wrote his prose

by rule; so long as a desired effect was produced, he did not care how it was done. His matter, consequently, represents a vigorous speech more than a well-considered composition. Sterne, however, is read not so much for the way in which he has written as for the humour of the philosophy he propounds. If we accept the definition of humour as being that which springs from watching "the eternal incongruities of human nature, the ever-recurring cross purposes of human lives," we must claim for Sterne a high place among the humorists.

(7) Miss Frances Burney, Madame D'Arblay.

Between the times of Smollett and Jane Austen, only one humorous novel appeared which had any long existence This was the *Evelina* of Miss Frances Burney, the daughter of Doctor Burney, the historian of music. Miss Burney watched the amusing side of life with great interest and judgment, and her wit has the merit of being inoffensive and true.

She was born in 1752 at Lynn, in Norfolk, where her father was organist of the parish church. She seems to have been a silent and shy child, and at eight years old was not able to read. At that time Mr. Burney left Lynn for London; and, after several moves, settled in a house in St. Martin's Lane, off Leicester Square. It had the interest of having been the residence of Sir Isaac Newton. Her father had become Dr. Burney, by a musical degree conferred at Oxford, and at the house in St. Martin's Lane he frequently entertained, securing as his guests a number of the remarkable people of the day. Fanny Burney, still very shy, said very little at these parties, and sat in the corner of the room watching everybody. She was gifted with great powers of invention, and a keen sense of humour, though she did not appreciate the finer shades of character, while she observed all marked peculiarities. The impressions made upon her were permanent and strong. She began to write little stories as soon as she could use her pen; and the scenes she saw at her father's evenings gave her plenty of good material. These tales were read with delight by her sisters, for Dr. Burney knew nothing about them. He had taken as his second wife a kindly woman, who believed in girls knowing something of domestic affairs rather than in scribbling books. She was not, however, harsh with Fanny, and a bonfire of the manuscripts was cheerfully made

Some considerable time passed before Fanny wrote again, though the plots of her tales were always in her memory. One
ır was a tale about a girl named Caroline Evelyn,
an unfortunate marriage, gave birth to a little
nd died. Frances' brain was full of what might

happen to this child. A motherless girl—highly connected on one side, badly connected on the other—was likely to go through dreadful experiences. She would, of course, have to come into contact with many kinds of people. There would probably be an objectionable fop, gay in a court dress; and another would-be fop lower in the social scale, who patronised the Hampstead balls; while in contrast to them studies of a captain in the merchant service, a rough sea-dog, and a starving poet from the Lowlands of Scotland might easily be made.

Frances could endure her idleness no longer. She set to steady work with pen and paper, and the *History of Evelina* in course of time was completed. She sold it privately to a bookseller in Fleet Street, who gave her twenty pounds for the copyright, and *Evelina* was published in January, 1778.

Frances passed a few wretched weeks waiting for the result. Presently a murmur of approval began to be heard. A good notice appeared in the *London Review*, and a better one in the *Monthly*. Before long the success became a triumph. Reynolds, Gibbon, Burke, and Sheridan all spoke in her praise. Johnson, an old friend of Dr. Burney, liked her novel better than any of Fielding's. All the distinguished people of the day in the world of art and letters sought eagerly for Miss Burney's acquaintance. Frances remained calm and quiet, and found her best happiness in the pleasure she had given to her relations. When she told her great secret, Dr. Burney wept over his daughter's story, and Johnson fondled her in his arms and called her "his dear love, his little character-monger."

The success of *Evelina* being assured, Frances Burney thought she would turn her attention to dramatic writing. She planned a comedy with the name of *The Witlings*, remarkably like the *Femmes Savantes* of Molière. Frances had never read this comedy; but those who looked over her play said that her work was not strong enough to stand against it. Frances turned her attention to fiction again, and, with a year's work, gave the world *Cecilia*.

The book, an immediate success, was praised as a classical novel. The taste of the present day, if it reads Miss Burney at all, is in favour of her first story rather than her second. *Cecilia* was lacking in the fresh and natural tone which distinguished *Evelina*, yet it showed that in the period between the two, Miss Burney had learned much in the art of composition.

For the next eleven years she had little to do with literature. She accepted a post at Court and found it so irksome that she soon resigned. In 1793 she married General d'Arblay, an exile from France, and three years later published her third novel of *Camilla*, by which she cleared three thousand guineas. The

book was not as successful as either of the other two. The skill of the character-studies remained; but the style began to lack in strength and simplicity.

Madame d'Arblay lived until 1840, and then died in her eighty-eighth year. She left behind her five volumes of a *Diary and Letters*, which vary to a great degree, some being bright and lively, and others dull in the extreme. The book is valuable at the present time on account of the description it gives concerning the people and the manners of the time.

Madame d'Arblay had the honour of being the first English woman to write long novels worthy of remembrance. *Evelina* showed that a woman's hand might paint the humours of mankind with spirit and taste. She was followed in her methods to some degree by Jane Austen; though their works when compared show that the teacher was easily surpassed by the pupil.

(2) Historical Work.

(1) David Hume (1711-1776).

An important step in literature was taken during the latter half of the century, when historical work was brought into the position of real literature. This effect was chiefly produced by the work of three men—David Hume, William Robertson, and Edward Gibbon. Hume won a name not only as a historian, but as an essayist and philosopher. His writing was distinguished for its lucidity, which extended to both style and treatment of subject.

Hume was born in 1711, his parents being persons of position in Berwickshire. From his earliest days he was always fond of books, though he made no particular mark as a scholar, and his choice of a profession was for long undetermined. At the age of twenty-five he was sent to Bristol with letters of introduction to various merchants. Business principles soon became very repellent to him, and he left for France with the desire to live moderately and to write. He spent three years with the Jesuits at La Flèche, and there planned his first book, a *Treatise of Human Nature*. This was unsuccessful; yet a third volume appeared in the following year. He became known to many literary men; and, in 1742, when he published his *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary* at Edinburgh, they attracted a great deal of attention, and were well received. In these Essays Hume clearly showed his political position, to which he steadfastly adhered through all his life. He followed the natural instincts of his birth, and supported aristocratic government. His insight into the workings of popular government made him its strong opponent.

In 1746 he was appointed secretary in an expedition against France, and in the following year went on a military embassy to Vienna and Turin. He had abridged the first part of his Essays, and during his absence the book was published under the title of *Philosophical Essays concerning the Human Understanding*; it again failed to attract any attention. His next work was more successful. In 1752 he settled down in Edinburgh; his *Political Discourses*, published in the same year, being very well received. In London he brought out, at the same time, an *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, which obtained much less success.

Hume was then appointed Librarian to the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, a post which gave him the use of many books indispensable for his history. His next work appeared in 1754, a quarto volume on the *Reigns of James I. and Charles I.*; to his great disappointment the book was universally disliked. Hume was so upset by this failure that he talked of changing his name and of going to reside in France. "I scarcely heard," he wrote, "of any man in the three kingdoms considerable for rank or letters that could endure the book." The reason seems to have been that Hume laid an undue stress upon the privileges of the prerogative under the Plantagenets and Tudors in order to make a strong defence for the policy of Charles the First. When the other volumes of the *History* were issued, the general opinion began to change. In 1756, 1759, and 1762 the other parts appeared, until he brought it down to the Revolution. After Hume's death Smollett wrote the continuation to the end of the reign of George the Second. In spite of the clamour made against him, Hume, in all the qualities of the historian, was excellent. His perception was acute; his historical views wide and intelligent. His own feelings occasionally tinged his judgment; he could never write history with the icy coldness of Hallam, or with the detail of unimportant points which has marked more modern historians. The charm of Hume's work lies in his style, which so great a writer as Gibbon contemplated with "a mixed sensation of delight and despair."

Hume was the first historical writer who made any attempt to combine accounts of the condition of the people and the state of arts and sciences with constitutional changes, and political incidents. Macaulay was said to have been ambitious therefore of proving his worthy successor; and his *History of England* began where Hume's left off.

In 1763 Hume went again to France, a country where he had a great literary reputation, and of which he was particularly fond. For three years he acted as secretary to the English Embassy in Paris, and on his return to England was appointed

an Under Secretary of State. This office he held until 1769, and died, seven years later, in his house at Edinburgh.

(2) Rev. William Robertson (1721-1793).

William Robertson, born in 1721, was a native of Midlothian, and entered the Scottish Church. He took a large part in the public affairs of Edinburgh, and in 1761 was appointed King's Chaplain. Four years previously he had published a *History of Scotland*, which, in 1762, gained for him the Principalship of Edinburgh University, and two years later the post of Historiographer for Scotland.

In 1769 appeared the *History of Charles the Fifth*, where, following the example of Hume, he gave a sketch of the progress of society from the subversion of the Roman Empire to the beginning of the sixteenth century. Eight years afterwards he wrote the *History of America*. Robertson was a painstaking and industrious worker, yet had not, like Hume, any originality of thought, nor, like Gibbon, the richness of mind and expression which is needful for attempting a Latin style.

Just as Hume awakened the interests of Macaulay, the opening chapters of *Charles the Fifth* aroused the interest for history in Carlyle. "New worlds of knowledge, vistas in all directions," were brought into Carlyle's mind by Robertson's flowing periods.

(3) Edward Gibbon (1737-1794).

In 1776 the fruit of many days and nights of laborious study was given to the world; and English scholarship was elevated by the issue of the first volume of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. To the execution of this great work, Gibbon, its author, dedicated the whole of his life. It was not until 1788 that the last volume was completed, and Gibbon survived the completion only by six years. The book represented the work of an entire lifetime; the visible emblem of a pure and disinterested devotion to art, and of a man's intention to produce his best, regardless of praise or reward. To Gibbon there was no need for hurry or for self-advertisement. During the long years of his work younger writers came up, gained a temporary reputation, and vanished. Gibbon was content to bide his time, and was never tempted from his work for the sake of the reward of contemporary fame. Gibbon ranks as pre-eminent among the three historians who adorned the close of the eighteenth century. Of the other two Hume stands nearest to him, not only on account of the classic simplicity of his style, but also because his *History of England* was the first attempt to treat the subject as a whole. Robertson, though famous as a man of

letters, occupies the lowest place; his sense of the philosophy and meaning of history was not strong. His powers of narrative description were, however, very great; and there is considerable fascination in his style. Gibbon combined all the qualities of Hume and Robertson, and added more. The unity of history in our age, so strenuously insisted upon by Freeman, had been felt by Gibbon; and this feeling is present in every sentence that he wrote. He understood history too well to fall into the mistake of thinking that the actions of any one man, or the career of any one nation, were entirely the result of what they have done themselves. He had sufficient width of vision to appreciate that the actions of any state at any given time were but the necessary consequence of what had gone before; and that the hasty deeds of any period inevitably bring about the slow retribution of the future. His work was the first one that dealt with history in this broad spirit, and on that ground alone has a claim to reputation.

Gibbon was the son of a man of good family, and of good estate. His brothers and sisters all died young, and left him the sole inheritor of apparently ample means. But these means were squandered by his father; and though Gibbon was not put to the necessity of wasting his powers in order to secure his daily bread, he remained through his life a man of but moderate means. After a private education at home, Gibbon was sent up to Oxford. His mind was attracted by theological controversy; and at the age of fifteen years he solemnly entered the Church of Rome. His father, acting with great promptitude, sent him immediately over to Switzerland, where, at Lausanne, he was received into the house of a Calvinist minister, with whom he passed the next five years. Eighteen months after his arrival he was taken again into the Protestant Church, and the rest of his stay in Switzerland was devoted to regular and reasonable study.

His life was interrupted by a sudden recall to England; and he began, for the first time in his life, to gain a knowledge of outdoor life. A commission was obtained for him in a militia regiment; and England then being engaged in the Seven Years' War, he was kept on active duty the whole year round, and saw a good deal of practical military service. Distasteful as much of this life was to him, it was at anyrate an introduction to aspects of human existence with which he was unacquainted; and in his memoirs he frankly acknowledged the benefit he acquired. "The captain of the Hampshire Grenadiers," he says in his memoirs, "has not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire."

In the year 1762 the militia were disbanded. Gibbon found

the opportunity of putting into practice a scheme which he had long been contemplating. This was a visit to Italy, for which he prepared himself carefully by a long period of reading and study. It was during this journey that the inspiration came which pointed out to him the work of his life. "It was at Rome," he wrote, "on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amid the ruins of the capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind." Round this task the whole life of Gibbon centred; and when that task was completed Gibbon's work was done.

It could not, however, be begun for some long time. For five years he lived with his father in England, under circumstances which did not tend to his comfort or happiness; and it was two years after his father's death before he could secure a sufficient competence for the undertaking. Then followed in London and elsewhere, a long spell of steady and conscientious toil, resulting in the publication, during the year 1776, of the first volume of the *Decline and Fall*. The success of the book was immediate and great. The first edition of a thousand copies was sold in a few days, and second and third editions speedily followed. Gibbon's calm judgment and genuine modesty were not upset by the fame which instantly settled on him. He worked away steadily at his task, and two more volumes of his book were ready in 1781. Seven years elapsed between the publication of the first volume and the last. Then there remained to Gibbon six years of invalid life; and he passed away, the victim of a complication of maladies, in the fifty-seventh year of his age.

Before the middle of the eighteenth century, no great historical work had appeared in any modern language. The books which attempted to supply the want were memoirs, biographical sketches of contemporaries, the materials for history; but not in the scientific sense, history itself. The course of political events during the eighteenth century had produced an intense desire to study the causes of disastrous movements. One consequence was a wonderful development of historical writing, in which, apart from the mere record of events, there appeared the first attempt at comprehending their origins. Voltaire, in the *Life of Louis XIV.* (1751), was virtually the pioneer of the work. Hume, with his *History of England* (1754), produced the same results by working independently upon the same lines. Robertson, coming shortly after, was directly influenced by Voltaire.

It is Gibbon's glory that he not only made himself master of a huge mass of fact, which he understood intelligently, and

with which, as a rule, he dealt accurately, but that he was gifted with a perception of the meaning and teaching of history. Yet he never allows this perception to outweigh or to counterbalance the importance which he knows must necessarily attach to the understanding of actual facts. Hence he avoids the danger, prominent in many modern historical writers, of falling into too hasty generalisations from an imperfect statement of the facts. The conclusions to be deduced from the multitude of facts that he has marshalled and displayed are more than clear; and Gibbon showed a wise exercise of judgment in preferring to leave them to speak for themselves. His view of society is essentially the view of the eighteenth century; while his appreciation of the secret policies of history shows itself in the notes which he added to his text.

With regard to the features of Gibbon's style, the excellence and copiousness of his vocabulary is the first thing to claim our attention. He possessed not only a full command of words, but had in addition the power of a brilliant, emphatic expression. He achieved his effects by a peculiar idiom, the employment of the genitive, which involved a great enlargement of the sentence. In the following sentences, where he writes concerning the foundation of Constantinople, the method is very evident: "The prospect of beauty, of safety, and of wealth united in a single spot was sufficient to justify the choice of Constantine. But as some mixture of prodigy and fable has in every age been supposed to reflect a becoming majesty on the origin of great cities, the emperor was desirous of ascribing his resolution not so much to the uncertain counsels of human policy as to the eternal and infallible decrees of Divine wisdom. In one of his laws he had been careful to instruct posterity that in obedience to the commands of God he laid the everlasting foundations of Constantinople; and though he has not condescended to relate in what manner the celestial inspiration was communicated to his mind, the defect of his modest silence has been liberally supplied by the ingenuity of succeeding writers, who describe the co-eternal vision which appeared to the fancy of Constantine as he slept within the walls of Byzantium."

The period of time covered by the great work is that which extended from the accession of Commodus, A.D. 180, to the throne of the Roman Empire, down to the destruction of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. This extent of years falls into two divisions of very unequal length, the first extending from the days of Commodus until the last of the Western Cæsars, 476 A.D.; the second for the thousand years that followed. The three centuries of the first division are, however, full of points absorbing in their interest. The apparent calm of

the affairs of Rome, the century of anarchy under Diocletian, the civil wars of Constantine's sons, the strange career and defeat of Julian, the miseries of the Gothic war, the sieges of Rome and sack by the Huns; the appearance of Attila and the Huns, and the final submergence of the Western Empire under the Germanic tribes, belong to the temporal side of history. On the spiritual, there is the question of the early church, the conversion of Constantine, the conflicts of hostile sects, the Arian heresy, the triumph of Athanasius, the spread of monasticism, and the extinction of paganism.

With the fall of the Western Empire, the days of antiquity ended, and the opening of the sixth century marked the beginning of the strange period known as the Middle Ages. During that long time, the "old field of civilisation was broken up and sown with new seed unknown to antiquity." The despotism of Rome was replaced by the complicated systems of the feudal tenure; the innumerable rites and beliefs of Paganism were supplanted by the one faith and authority of the church; the Greek philosophies were contemned, and scholastic theology took their place; the classic tongues crumbled away, and the new languages of France, Italy, and Spain arose from their remains. The municipal systems of the old world were, as time went on, succeeded by national institutions based on different plans of representation; the world was enriched by the working of sciences and arts, and the more civilised part of mankind passed slowly into the conditions of modern times.

This mass of material Gibbon resolved to deal with in such a way as to present clearly the general lines and tendencies running through the whole. Many of his chapters might be expanded into volumes, but such expansion would seldom be so valuable as his grasp of general principles.

Gibbon begins his second part with a study of the times of Justinian, dealing with the campaigns of Belisarius and Narses, and in a lofty notable manner with the intricate questions of Roman law. Immediately after these chapters comes the survey of the work before him, in which Gibbon describes no less than ten main lines, along each of which he will advance to his final goal. In these divisions he deals with the history of the Franks and the formation of the great Teutonic kingdoms of Western Europe; with Mahomet and his successors; with the Bulgarians, the Hungarians, the Russians, the Normans, the Venetians, and the Ottoman Turks. He is of far too fine a sympathy to end his task with the fall of Constantinople. His theme has been the decline of the Empire; the central point of all his work, the ancient city of Rome. Leaving the tumult and the miseries of Constantinople, he adds three more chapters;

and among the ruins of the Capitol, bids farewell to the Roman Empire.

"He remains the one historian of the eighteenth century whom modern research has neither set aside nor threatened to set aside. . . . The work of Gibbon must ever keep its place."

(4) Edmund Burke (1729-1797).

Burke is regarded as the first orator or writer who combines passion with reason. His books and speeches were not only eloquent defences of a constitutional government, but also exposures of the errors of democracy. The generation of Englishmen who came after the Revolution had learnt some common-sense from its results, and were by no means inclined to accept the wild theories of its supporters. Burke strongly influenced the bulk of the English people by his horror of Rousseau and the so-called metaphysicians. The advocates of Principles and Ideas were asked in vain for practical examples of the success of their theories. Burke confuted them in superb style, with strength and wisdom of expression.

Burke was born in Dublin in 1728 or 1729. His ancestors had dwelt at Limerick; and, in the days of the Reformation, remained in the Catholic faith. Their possessions were taken from them by Cromwell. Burke's father had become a Protestant, though his mother was a Roman Catholic; and Burke in his earliest years spent much time with his uncles who were still Catholics, while his schoolmaster was a Quaker. He thus obtained while quite young an insight into the differences between many creeds. From 1743 to 1748 he was at Trinity College, Dublin; and occupied himself chiefly with miscellaneous reading. He entered at the Middle Temple, and in 1750 went up to London to keep his terms.

His first literary work, published six years later, was *A Vindication of Natural Society*, intended as an ironical answer to Bolingbroke's theories of religion. It is chiefly interesting now as showing how he practised himself in the style he afterwards adopted. The *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, appearing in the same year, has far less vigour and freedom.

Burke was always in delicate health, and at this time had to retire to Bath, where he stayed at the house of Dr. Nugent, an Irish physician. Burke married his doctor's daughter in the spring of 1757, and, on recruiting his strength, returned to London, where, at Garrick's house, on Christmas Day, 1758, he made the acquaintance of Johnson.

He entered Parliament in 1766 as member for Wendover, and during his first session supported Rockingham's conciliatory policy towards the American colonies. He then defended this

policy both in and out of Parliament until the Declaration of Independence in 1776. His famous *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, dealing with American affairs, appeared in the following year.

The Anti-Popery Gordon Riots broke out in London during 1780. Burke, though calling himself a Whig, had advised the milder treatment of the Catholics, so, when Lord North's government fell two years later, and the Whigs came into power, Burke received no office in spite of the service he had rendered to them. On the death of Lord Rockingham, the Whig leader, three months later, the whole party split asunder. Lord Shelburne became head of the government, only to fall in 1783. At this crisis Fox and Burke both joined the Tories. A coalition ministry was formed, and superseded in December of the same year. On the rejection of Fox's India Bill, Pitt was made Prime Minister; and the Whigs were out of office for half a century.

For fourteen years, from 1781 to 1795, Burke devoted himself to the affairs of India, and undertook the conduct of the impeachment of Warren Hastings for abuse of his power as Governor of India.

In 1788 he opposed Pitt's Regency Bill, which laid down that the Prince of Wales could not claim to act as Regent, and that the appointment lay with Parliament. Burke at this period lost the confidence of his party and his friends; but, on the outbreak of the French Revolution, he supported the bill for the increase of the army, and declared he would not remain on terms of friendship with anyone who would try to further the introduction of a democracy like that of France. In November he published his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, which was received with great delight by the king and the Tories.

The following passage from the *Reflections* combated the idea that France was a poverty-stricken country. Burke, with a wiser view, saw that the safety lay, not in revolution, but in constitutional development.

France before the Revolution.

"When I consider the face of the kingdom of France; the multitude and opulence of her cities; the useful magnificence of her spacious high-roads and bridges; the opportunity of her artificial canals and navigations opening the conveniences of maritime communication through a solid continent of so immense an extent; when I turn my eyes to the stupendous works of her ports and harbours, and to her whole naval apparatus, whether for war or trade; when I bring before my view the number of her fortifications, constructed with so bold and masterly a skill, and made and maintained at so prodigious a charge, presenting an armed front and impenetrable barrier to her enemies upon every side; when I recollect how very small a part of that extensive region is without cultivation, and to what complete perfection the culture of many of the

best productions of the earth have been brought in France; when I reflect on the excellence of her manufactures and fabrics, second to none but ours, and in some particulars not second; when I contemplate the grand foundations of charity, public and private; when I survey the state of all the arts that beautify and polish life; when I reckon the men she has bred for extending her fame in war, her able statesmen, the multitude of her profound lawyers and theologians, her philosophers, her critics, her historians and antiquaries, her poets, and her orators sacred and profane: I behold in all this something which awes and commands the imagination, which checks the mind on the brink of precipitate and indiscriminate censure, and which demands that we should very seriously examine what and how great are the latent vices that could authorise us at once to level so specious a fabric with the ground. I do not recognise, in this view of things, the despotism of Turkey. Nor do I discern the character of a government that has been, on the whole, so oppressive, or so corrupt, or so negligent, as to be utterly unfit *for all reformation*. I must think such a government well deserved to have its excellencies heightened; its faults corrected; and its capacities improved into a British constitution."

In 1791 he openly broke with Fox, and published his *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, vindicating himself against the charge of having abandoned his Whig friends, and defending his attitude against the Revolution.

A few months after the appearance of the *Reflections* he issued a *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly* severely criticising the Revolution and its authors, and hinting that a European intervention to suppress democracy might become necessary. By the end of 1791 he was convinced that such was the case, and devoted the rest of his career to advocating a war with France, and to supporting measures at home to prevent the adoption of Jacobin methods.

The feelings expressed by Burke were welcomed by a vast number of the English people, and the murder of the French king in 1793 quickly roused the whole country to Burke's support. He was again in failing health, and retired from Parliament in 1794. The death of his only son, the result of a rapid decline, then completely broke him down. In 1795 he was able to write *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, strongly condemning the actions of the French Republic, but he never recovered from the shock of his loss, and died in 1797 a disappointed and a miserable man.

75. The Last Days of the Drama.

(1) The interval between the closing and re-opening of theatres.

The Drama, occupying a unique position in English literature, demands a treatment and record of its own. Until the time of the Rebellion it was one of the leading channels of English

thought and expression; but the ill-treatment it met with at the hands of the Commonwealth then gave it a blow from which it never recovered. Its revival came in the early days of the Restoration, though the only position it could obtain was inferior to its older position before the Rebellion.

(2) The revival of the Drama—Sir William Davenant.—The re-opening—John Dryden.

This was brought about in a singular manner. Sir William Davenant, supposed to be related to Shakspere, was a person of many occupations, being, among other things, a composer of music. He contrived in some way to get the ear of Cromwell, and persuaded him to allow in London the performance of a musical entertainment. This was one that Davenant had himself composed, and was to be done "after the manner of the ancients." The Protector thought it was not a profane play, and gave his consent; the result being so inoffensive that Davenant, with some precautions, was able to ask him for permission to perform an opera. The subject of the opera was enquired into, and Cromwell learnt that it turned upon the siege of Rhodes, an ancient Greek legend of one Demetrius, known by the surname of Destroyer of Towns, who was only defeated by the resistance of Rhodes, the famous capital of the island of that name. Cromwell had no objection to an opera which taught such a lesson; and when Davenant's work was produced it was received with the greatest applause. The success of the opera exercised a great influence in making the way easy for the return of the drama.

Four years later came the Restoration, with an immediate re-opening of the theatres, and the quick development of a new comedy and a new tragedy. The kind of play that had been extinguished in 1640 was not revived. Dryden began his dramatic work in 1663 with *The Wild Gallant*, of which Mr. Pepy's opinion has been already stated.

(3) Sir George Etherege.

Another writer of comedies followed this example with *The Comical Revenge*, and Etherege's play was more valuable than Dryden's. The chief merit of both was their freedom from the taint by which the later Restoration plays were damaged.

Etherege's second play, appearing four years after the other two, was entitled *She Would if She Could*, and his last and best comedy, *The Man of Mode*, came out in 1676.

Etherege's three plays are ingenious, though not original. *The Comical Revenge* is closely copied from Jonson and Fletcher.

She Would if She Could, while full of brightness and gaiety, has an undesirable tone.

The Man of Mode is an improvement on the other two; its wit, though keen, is true; it is well arranged for representation, and gives a more accurate picture of social life than had hitherto been known in comedy. Sir Fopling Flutter, a character suggested by a member of the ancient family of Scrope, depicts truthfully a man of fashion. The hero of the play was supposed to be a study of Etherege himself.

Etherege, during his later days, rose high in the diplomatic service. He died about 1691, for years a faithful adherent of James the Second.

(4) Thomas Shadwell.

Shadwell, the friend and then the enemy of Dryden, is now chiefly remembered as the hero of *Mac Flecknoe*. Shadwell wrote seventeen plays, which contain good descriptions of the life and habits of the seventeenth century, especially upon its seamy side. Those plays gave useful material to Sir Walter Scott, who used them for his account of Alsatia, the poor debtor's quarter in London, when he wrote his fascinating *Fortunes of Nigel*.

(5) William Wycherley.

Wycherley, belonging to an old Shropshire family, was born about 1640, and lived, during his early manhood, for some years in France. After the Restoration he returned to England, yet had no connection with the stage until 1672, when his first play, *Love in a Wood*, appeared. His friendship with the Duchess of Cleveland became of great advantage to him, and he quickly produced three most excellent comedies.

Love in a Wood had been little better than the early attempts of Dryden and Etherege; but *The Gentleman Dancing-Master*, in 1673, was stronger; while *The Country Wife* of 1675, and *The Plain Dealer* of two years later, were two of the most witty plays of English comedy. Wycherley, in his best work, drew vivid and accurate pictures of England during the Restoration. A strong French influence, brought about by his knowledge of France, ran through all his dramas, and he succeeded better than any of his predecessors in reproducing something of the sharp repartee of Molière.

(6) Three Dramatists.

We now pass on to the dramatists whose work virtually belonged to the eighteenth century. The times of the Restoration had passed away before it began; so they wrote of the Restoration without personal experience, and the name of

Artificial has consequently been applied to their comedies. Their plays have little to do with plot; they are full of laughable scenes and incidents, and have an increased amount of a rapid dialogue copied from Wycherley. We have to deal with three names.

Sir John Vanbrugh declared that he had been born in the Bastille, where his parents were detained as prisoners. This seems to have been about 1666. He entered the army, and on his retirement, having a great knowledge of heraldry, was made Clarencieux King-at-Arms. In 1695 he was appointed secretary to the Greenwich Hospital Commission, and his first play, *The Relapse*, appeared two years after. He quickly followed with *The Provoked Wife*, though his last play was not written till 1705. In the later years of his life he became a somewhat famous architect, and built Blenheim Palace, the nation's gift to the Duke of Marlborough. Vanbrugh was knighted in 1714, and died in 1726. His first play, *The Relapse*, of 1697, was celebrated for its character of Lord Foppington, a highly developed study of Sir Fopling Flutter. *The Provoked Wife*, with a hero bearing the significant name of Sir John Brute, is not so brilliant as *The Relapse*, though as a play it is better arranged. *The Confederacy* is curious as illustrating an entire change in the characters of a comedy. The lords and the ladies, who were the only persons acceptable to the Restoration drama, were suddenly replaced by individuals of the middle class. Scriveners, dealers in old clothes, and money-lenders filled the stage. Comedy was taught to deal with all kinds of people.

(7) William Congreve.

Congreve, the descendant of a county family in Staffordshire, was born in 1670. His father, who had been in the service, became a land agent in Ireland, and William got his education in the Kilkenny Grammar School and Trinity College, Dublin. He had a great liking for dramatic work, and begged Dryden to look at his first play. Dryden praised it highly, which helped Congreve to sell it, and it came out in the January of 1693. *The Double Dealer* followed in the same year, and *Love for Love*, *The Mourning Bride*, and *The Way of the World* were all written by 1700. The first one, *The Old Bachelor*, was no better than the early comedies of Wycherley, while *The Double Dealer*, almost too tragical to be a comedy, was full of gloomy characters. A difference was seen in the next play, *Love for Love*, a perfect comedy, full of amusing personages, to whom were given perfect dialogue and excellent situations.

The Mourning Bride, Congreve's one tragedy, is said to have brought him in more than any of his comedies. He had a

natural liking for the tragic sense, and a perception of its powers. Yet, when he came to write, Congreve found himself bound to some extent by certain conventionalities of his time, and could hardly give his thoughts a natural play.

His last and best comedy was *The Way of the World*, noted for its charming character of Millamant, played to perfection by the beautiful Mrs. Bracegirdle. Congreve devised her from the heroine of *Marriage à la Mode*, a play by Dryden, though he only adapted Dryden's outline, and turned his sketch into a finished picture. The writing of this play was better than that in *Love for Love*; since Congreve, during the period of its construction, had been annoyed by Jeremy Collier's criticism of his style. Congreve gave up writing for the stage during the rest of his life, and, obtaining some lucrative Government appointments, wrote one or two masques and some excellent lyrics, but did no more. He died in 1729, leaving the greater part of his money to the Duchess of Marlborough, his intimate friend. One stanza from a short poem will prove the merit of his verse.

On Mrs. Arabella Hunt Singing.

"Let all be hush'd, each softest motion cease,
Be every loud tumultuous thought at peace,
And every ruder grasp of breath,
Be calm, as in the arms of Death:
And thou, most fickle, most uneasy part,
Thou restless wanderer, my Heart,
Be still; gently, ah! gently leave,
Thou busy, idle thing, to heave:
Stir not a pulse; and let my blood,
That turbulent, unruly flood,
Be softly staid;
Let me be all, but my attention, dead.
Go, rest, unnecessary springs of life,
Leave your officious toil and strife;
For I would hear her voice, and try
If it be possible to die."

(8) George Farquhar.

Farquhar, born at Londonderry in 1678, brought out his first comedy, *Love and a Bottle*, a year after Vanbrugh's *Relapse*. This is only to be noticed as having rather more of the new wit than the plays of his predecessors. *The Constant Couple* and *Sir Harry Wildare*, consecutive plays, were rendered famous by the representation of Sir Harry as acted by the charming Peg Woffington. The next two plays were not of much account, while the last pair, *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Beaux' Stratagem*, were excellent. Farquhar was a man of good feeling, which gave him the power of realising that there were other

people in the world besides himself. He could enter into the position of his characters, and understand their feelings as well as his own. This gave to his plays a realism which had been wanting in the work of Congreve and Vanbrugh.

(9) The Tragedians—Dryden, Crowne, Settle, Otway, Southerne, Rowe, and Addison.

The tragedies of this time are best represented by Dryden's work, which has been dealt with in a previous chapter. We should notice the names of two rivals—John Crowne, who wrote the popular comedy of *Sir Courtly Nice*, and a good tragedy on *Caligula*; and Elkanah Settle, satirised by Dryden in *Absalom and Achitophel*, and author of a heroic play, *The Empress of Morocco*, which was considered as being far better than Dryden's. Thomas Otway, another tragic writer, was famous for two plays, *The Orphans* and *Venice Preserved*. Thomas Southerne was the tragic writer of the reign of Queen Anne. Nicholas Rowe, poet laureate to George the First, was author of *Tamerlane* in 1702, and *Jane Shore* in 1714. Addison's *Cato*, in 1713, did not disturb the professional play-writers. It met with considerable success, due to the political feeling of the time, and so long as that feeling was gratified, its coldness and dull rhetoric were alike unheeded. It had been modelled on French form, so Voltaire was good enough to pronounce that *Cato* was the first tragedy an Englishman had written.

(10) Miscellaneous Writers for the Stage—Young, Gay, Fielding, Foote, Garrick, Home.

The drama being by this time well established, plays for the stage were continually written, though, as they were only for the purpose of acting, they can hardly be regarded as literature. Young, the writer of *Night Thoughts* had his tragedy *Revenge* performed in 1721, a play containing literary merit, but, like all literary plays, virtually unactable. Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, in 1728, showed the possibility of dramatic work in a new form, and light comedy was carried on by Colley Cibber. Fielding used the stage to criticise public affairs as Foote and Garrick did with their farces. But when a play like Johnson's tragedy of *Irene* took the stage in 1749, it could hold it for a very little time, though the Scotch tragedy of *Douglas*, by John Home, was more successful. Comedies and domestic plays continued in numbers; with an exception of two, there were few of any importance.

(11) Dr. Oliver Goldsmith.

The first of these is that of Oliver Goldsmith, who in 1768 was ›hant with his *Good-Natured Man* at Covent Garden.

For months he had been torn with worry and disappointment. Garrick had promised to take the play and to produce it if possible at Drury Lane; but the liking of the time was for a kind of comedy called Sentimental or Genteel, and anything in the least farcical was designated low. Goldsmith always liked the plays of his countryman, Farquhar, and decided to make a return to genuine and natural humour. Garrick seemed to think that his audiences would be shocked at some of Goldsmith's scenes, and handed the manuscript to Coleman, the manager of Covent Garden. Coleman did not much like the play, and the actors seemed to think it gave them few opportunities. When the night of the first performance came round Sir Joshua Reynolds insisted on dining with Goldsmith, whom he saw was in a state of nervous agitation, and unfit to be alone. After dinner they hastened to the theatre to hear the actor who spoke the prologue, putting into it a profound melancholy, which at once damped the cheerfulness of the audience. The principal performer played very badly because he thought he was too good for his part; while two comedians, taking advantage of the sulky principal, exaggerated their own parts, and shocked the sentimentalists. In a scene where bailiffs were concerned, the pit cried out that their language was "low," and Goldsmith's failure seemed inevitable. It was not until the end of the fourth act that his luck turned; then one of the comedians had to read an amusing letter, and did it with such skill and vigour that the whole house laughed and cheered. The fifth act was carried through amid great applause, and Goldsmith, who could not believe that he had been successful, rushed into the green room to thank the comedian. Some hours later, when at the club with his friends, he was noisy and excited, singing a song he never sang except on special occasions, until all were gone save Johnson and himself. Then Goldsmith gave way utterly, and burst into tears.

The next day brought him comfort. The scene with the bailiffs was cut out; and at the end of its run he found the play had been worth to him between three and four hundred pounds.

Goldsmith suffered tortures again at the production of his second play. *She Stoops to Conquer*, brought out in 1773, was refused by Coleman, "who," as Johnson afterwards said, "was prevailed on at last by much solicitation, nay, a kind of force, to bring it on." The members of the company took their tone from Coleman; several parts were refused, and a new company had to be got together. Coleman through all the rehearsals repeatedly condemned it. At last the 15th of March arrived, the day chosen for the first performance, and Goldsmith's

friends arranged a dinner to be presided over by Johnson. Goldsmith summoned up enough courage to attend the dinner; yet could not speak a word or swallow a mouthful. When it was time to go to the theatre Goldsmith dared not be present. He left all his friends and walked alone away from the theatre. As the play went on and was cheerfully received, one of his friends ran out to look for him, and at last found him pacing in the Mall of St. James' Park. He was with difficulty persuaded to come away, and on getting back to the theatre, when the the fifth act was just beginning, a hiss fell upon his ears, the only hiss of the evening, and the timid author had to be consoled. The profits of the first three nights came to between four and five hundred pounds. The tenth night was by royal command; the twelfth the closing one of the season. Another company acted it during the summer at the Haymarket, and it was taken on again during the winter on the re-opening of Covent Garden. Another royal command followed, and it ran for many nights.

The great merits of Goldsmith's plays hardly lay in the strength of their plots, for he carefully avoided melodramatic situations. His incidents, the events of the play, more than compensated by reason of their mirth. The dialogue was in the most elegant and refined English, allowing for the necessary exceptions of the low comedy, and all the characters were delineated delicately and faithfully, with a charming note of fellow-feeling between themselves and the author. The sweetness and humour of Goldsmith's own disposition, with his wonderful sense of sympathy, showed as clearly in his plays as in his poems and his novel.

(12) Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

The plays by Richard Brinsley Sheridan mark the last dramas that are both literary and dramatic. They were written between 1775 and 1779; each different from the others. *The Rivals* is comedy with a mixture of sentiment and farce. The immortal characters of Mrs. Malaprop, Sir Anthony Absolute, and Bob Acres are drawn with a power of humour that never degenerates into mere theatrical effect. *The School for Scandal* is rich with its paintings of Sir Peter and Lady Teazle, and of the contrast of Joseph and Charles Surface. *The Critic* is a farce written with perfect refinement; and Sir Fretful Plagiary, Puff, Dangle, and Sneer, are all portraits true and complete, with outline definite and clear.

The drama had to cease with the work of Sheridan; and it is well that so exquisite a hand as his should have brought it to its close.

76. Poetry of the Last Quarter of the Century.

(1) William Cowper (1731-1800).

William Cowper, son of the rector of Berkhamstead, lost his mother when he was six years old, and to so delicate and sensitive a child such a loss was inexpressibly great. His father, absorbed in parish work, did not pay much heed to his children, and in less than a year after his wife's death, William was sent off to a boarding-school. He went through the usual experiences of a weakly boy, and was bullied by the bigger ones until he broke down, when even his father realised that he must be taken away. The nervous terrors through which the child had gone led to an inflammation of his eyes, and he was sent to an oculist, in whose house he had to remain for two years. In his tenth year, his father entered him at Westminster.

Here he seems to have been much more happy than at home, and made himself popular with both masters and boys. For his age he was something of a scholar, and showed, even as a lad, the pure and refined taste belonging to his nature. He developed a liking for English poetry, especially reading Milton and Cowley. *Paradise Lost* he almost knew by heart. His first poem, written during the Westminster days, has good rhythm and easy expression. Cowper left Westminster in 1748, and entered at the Middle Temple. In Southampton now lived his uncle, Mr. Ashley Cowper, whose three daughters were just growing into womanhood. With these pleasant cousins, Cowper soon became very intimate; and in 1752, there was a definite engagement between him and Theodora, the second of the three.

William went into residence at the Temple, but the dull and dreary life after these years of cheerfulness seems to have told upon him with bad effect. There was, in his disposition, an unfortunate strain of melancholy, which tended to madness; and Ashley Cowper, in 1754, absolutely forbade the marriage. The effect upon the cousins was disastrous. Theodora's life was entirely broken. She never cared for anybody but Cowper, and the last years of her life, after his death, were passed in the profoundest melancholy. Cowper himself was more dangerously affected. His fit of brain weakness returned, until in 1763 he passed into a state of complete lunacy, and was placed in an asylum.

Doctor Cotton, the proprietor, was a man of much skill and high repute. He treated Cowper with such tender care that, at the end of two years, he could advise him to leave and seek for lodgings in a quiet country town. He went to Huntingdon, and there made the acquaintance of a clergyman, the Rev. Morley Unwin, who, with his wife and children, was then in residence.

Cowper found, after a short time, that he could obtain lodgings with the Unwins, and gladly went to their house, where Mrs. Unwin treated him as if she were his mother. A terrible accident occurred in 1767, when Mr. Unwin, riding to church, was thrown from his horse, and lived only four days after. Mrs. Unwin, having to leave the parsonage, moved to Olney, a dull little town in Buckinghamshire, and took Cowper with her.

The curate of this place was the Reverend John Newton, who in his young days had been a disreputable sailor. He suffered tortures in a slave plantation at Sierra Leone, and after being released was shipwrecked on his way home. This event he spoke of as his "Great Deliverance," and from that time he became a Calvinist. He got the mastership of a vessel, and for four years carried on a successful slave trade. After a time, as illness prevented him from continuing at sea, he became a tide surveyor in Liverpool. He then made the acquaintance of Whitfield and Wesley, and in 1764 was ordained curate of Olney. For the twelve years that followed, Cowper and he were hardly ever twelve hours apart.

Cowper's melancholy was rapidly increased by this unfortunate connection, and he received another shock on the death of his brother John in 1770. Three years later he was quite insane; and attempted to commit suicide, believing that it was the will of God that he should do so. When his effort failed he declared himself condemned to eternal perdition.

Mrs. Unwin nursed him with the greatest care, and on his partial recovery persuaded him to take to gardening. A friend then gave him three hares, and when one of them died, Cowper wrote its epitaph.

In 1779, Newton, disappointed at having no success with the people of Olney, left to take another living, which gave Mrs. Unwin the opportunity of suggesting to Cowper that he should attempt some good and sustained work in verse; thinking that such an employment would keep him in better health. Cowper, finding to his delight that he could compose without difficulty, wrote the *Progress of Error*; *Truth*; *Table-Talk*; and *Expostulation*. These four poems, begun in December, 1780, were finished in three months. The work was not only congenial to him, but he was thankful that it seemed to drive away his melancholy. The manuscript was sent to a publisher, who suggested that the volume should be enlarged. Cowper therefore added four other poems, on *Hope*, *Charity*, *Conversation*, and *Retirement*. The book appeared in 1782.

It throws a light upon both Cowper's work and Cowper's character. His wish, when he began the *Progress of Error*, was to be a teacher rather than a poet. The printed volume was

therefore opened with *Table-Talk*, which had been written to explain his views, and to give a key to his whole scheme. He makes two friends, A and B, begin their discussion by speaking of Glory, and enquiring whether it be true or false. The vices of kings are then discussed; and Liberty, without being defined, is accepted as the panacea for human wrongs. The Bard, B, then declares that one theme remains which a Poet should explain, or else Liberty will not be understood. This theme is Religion:

> "All other themes are sped,
> Hackneyed and worn to the last flimsy thread."

The form of religion that Cowper advocated was Evangelical, the enemy of the Moral Theology of many preceding years. To it, he had been led by Newton, from whom he also caught the narrowness of those who never mix with the active world, and cannot see any good in opinions different from their own.

At the time that he produced his first volume of verse, William Cowper was fifty years of age, and mentally unsound. When his next verses were written he had come under an influence far more wholesome than that of Newton.

Lady Austen, the sister-in-law of a clergyman near Olney, had become Cowper's great friend. She was a lively and sweet-natured woman, and felt a sincere pity for the poor invalid. Her cheerfulness almost cured his low spirits, and one evening when she was sitting with him, she amused him with the story of John Gilpin. Cowper lay awake half the night thinking over this lively tale, and composed his famous ballad early the next morning. Lady Austen liked his verses, but asked him why he did not give up the couplet, and write blank verse. He thought for a moment and said, "I will if you will give me a subject." "Oh," she answered, "you can write on any subject. Write on this Sofa." He was delighted with the idea, and the result was the poem called *The Task*. Cowper's first volume of poems had not any immediate success, but during the next two years *John Gilpin* had been printed and become quickly known, and when the second volume—in which *The Task* was incorporated—appeared in 1785, a great deal of attention was aroused. The buyers imagined that they had ordered a book of ballads in the John Gilpin style. They were surprised at finding it a volume of serious verse; though when they had looked at it, and found it delightful, they demanded at once copies of the first volume, and the two were issued as a complete edition in the following year. Cowper was immediately regarded as the sweetest poet of the age, though the most important result of *The Task* was that it brought about a reconciliation with his

relations. Harriet, the eldest daughter of Ashley Cowper, sister to Theodora, had married Sir Thomas Hesketh, and was left a widow in 1782. She was living at her father's house when *The Task* and *John Gilpin* appeared.

A kind letter, franked by her father, reached Cowper one morning—a letter which broke an estrangement of nineteen years. Lady Hesketh had been surprised and pained by the tone of some religious letters that her cousin had once written to her, and ceased all communication, though she never lost her kindly affection for him. The arrival of her letter started a correspondence between them, and in the spring of 1786, Lady Hesketh proposed to pay him a visit. Cowper was delighted; so Lady Hesketh, securing lodgings at the vicarage, went down to Olney in June.

After their long separation the meeting proved too much for Cowper, and a profound attack of melancholy followed. Luckily it lasted for only a short time. Lady Hesketh was pleased with Mrs. Unwin, and took the wise step of trying to get her away from Olney. Lady Hesketh declared that a house at Weston Underwood belonging to some of her friends was vacant, and that Mrs. Unwin could have it in the month of November. Lady Hesketh triumphed, and Mrs. Unwin and Cowper left Olney after a residence of nearly twenty years.

They had only been in their new abode for a fortnight when Cowper's dearest friend, the son of Mrs. Unwin, died of typhus fever at Winchester. The shock upset Cowper, and in two months he could only manage thirty lines of the *Iliad* which he was then translating. From January to June of 1787, he was in a sad condition, and again attempted suicide. Suddenly he recovered, and for two years enjoyed better health than he had known for a long time.

His translation of *Homer* was published in 1791, and brought him a thousand pounds. The rest of his life was one long struggle with trouble and illness. Mrs. Unwin, seized with paralysis, died in 1796, and by her loss he was deeply affected. He attempted to continue the revision of his *Homer*, and worked sadly until 1800. Then on the 25th of April he died.

(2) Cowper as a Poet.

In his poetical work Cowper stands alone. His blank verse was formed to some extent upon Milton, though he never acquired any of Milton's dignity or power. His heroic verse was based upon Charles Churchill's, and Churchill he easily surpassed. The real merit of his verse is that he carefully trained himself into the habit of expressing his thoughts in a natural way. He took great pains in his choice of "crisp, clear

English"; the selection of the best words to be put into their best places. His classical training had taught him what was implied by the beauty of phrase, and his sympathetic and receptive nature soon fell into the way of producing his desired effect. He came to believe that the musical expression of his thought was often of more importance than the thought itself.

It is interesting to notice how Cowper acknowledged his imperfections, and how quickly he recognised and was grateful for any improvement. *The Progress of Error* contained several instances of harsh verse which Cowper had realised, and could not control. In the *Expostulation* poem the fault was much less. Cowper wrote it with great humility, "I have written it with tolerable ease to myself, and in my own opinion . . . with more emphasis and energy than in either of the others."

The Task of three years later contains many examples of the way in which Cowper's verse became better in its form than in its matter. The poem as a whole is wanting in shape. It is not until the third book that definite arrangement is to be found. Cowper had not made any kind of scheme before he started, and though he opens his poem with the charming pedigree of the sofa as a descendant from the stool, he refuses to write about it because it reminds him of his gout.

> "The sofa suits
> The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
> Though on a sofa, may I never feel:
> For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
> Of grassy swarth, close cropped by nibbling sheep."

Then he passes quickly into a description of rustic scenes, and the sofa is forgotten. The different lives of town and country are contrasted, and some satirical lines follow to be taken up again as the principal subject for the second book.

The third book, *The Garden*, is better still, for Cowper deals with the subject of domestic happiness, and tells his readers all about himself. *The Winter Evening*, best of all his poems, deals with the delights of the fireside; the coming of the old village postman; his own reverie in his chair, and his pity for the sufferings of the poor. Here is to be found Cowper's most direct and exquisite verse, combined with careful and instinctive workmanship.

The Winter Morning Walk begins with charming and picturesque descriptions. The frosty morning and its aspect; the foddering of the cattle; the woodman and his dog; the feeding of the poultry; and the envy of sparrows are all told in simple humorous verse. Such work testifies to Cowper's

power of keen and accurate observation. It was given to him to see the beauty and the meaning of common things, and to immortalise them in tender and sympathetic lines.

"Come trooping at the house-wife's well-known call
The feathered tribes domestic. Half on wing,
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves
To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
The scattered grain, and thievishly resolved
To escape the impending famine, often scared
As oft return, a pert voracious kind. . . .
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resigned
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes
His wonted strut, and wading at their head
With well-considered steps, seems to resent
His altered gait and stateliness retrenched."

Yet this beautiful piece of work illustrates the two great weaknesses of Cowper's mind which have been previously noticed. The complete poem of *The Morning Walk* contains 906 lines. The first hundred and twenty are given to his natural verse. The remainder of the poem is taken up with a rambling discourse upon the occupation of kings; upon war and its evils; upon monarchy and its source; upon Liberty and the unavoidable decay of all human institutions. These instances clearly show how Cowper seldom knew beforehand what the line of thought in his poem would be, and also how Cowper's ignorance of the actual world led him into the strangest misconceptions.

As an illustration of opposite conditions *The Winter Walk at Noon* distinctly proves that Cowper could sometimes meditate with judgment and discretion. He does not describe the actual things that he sees in *The Walk*, but looks forward to the time when, in spring and summer, the flowers will bloom again, and the green leaves shoot from out the naked trees. His contemplation of the sure revival of nature's charms leads him to higher thoughts; he remembers the promises of the victory that spirit shall have over flesh, and the joy of the pure souls who shall belong to the kingdom of God.

"Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh
Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world; and what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things
Is merely as the working of the sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest:
For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds
The dust that waits upon His sultry march,

When sin hath moved Him, and His wrath is hot
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious in His chariot paved with love;
And what His storms have blasted and defaced
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair."

(3) Robert Burns (1759-1796).

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, two changes were coming about in poetry, one connected with a fresh treatment of nature, and the other, in a lesser degree, with the subject of man. They were seldom dealt with by the same writer, until Robert Burns, the most capable poet of the age, combined the interests of the two, and also revived a spirit neglected since the time of the Restoration. Chivalry, the conception of being faithful to the King, played a large part in the social conditions of the Middle Ages; true service and self-denial were regarded as the making of a man. The artificial days of the Elizabethans thwarted this idea, and it was not until the time of the Cavaliers that the feeling for it revived. Then Lovelace, in noble lines, could sing,

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more."

In the dull gloom of the later seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the strain was not re-echoed until Burns' verses were heard. The gift he possessed was the putting, into his poetry, of a passionate expression of love, a theme entirely excluded from eighteenth-century writing. To a happy confidence in Nature and her work, he added a genuine sympathy and affection for his fellow-men, far superior to the vague impossibilities of Rousseau. His impulsive nature was attracted by the wild theories of the French Revolution, and he was foolish enough to present four small carronades to the French Convention. As he was then an Exciseman in the King's service, his gift was stopped before it could be shipped from Dover, and Burns received a well-deserved reprimand.

We turn now to the material facts of his life. Robert Burness, or Burnes—the real forms of the name that the poet condensed—was born in 1759, at Alloway, two miles from Ayr. His father, an upright and self-respecting Scotch peasant, had come south from Kincardine, in the hope of getting employment as a gardener. He was not particularly successful; yet on his marriage was able to take a perpetual lease of seven acres of land, and to cultivate it as a nurseryman. He built his cottage with his own hands, and in the cottage, his son, the poet, was born.

Robert, at six years old, was sent to a neighbouring village school, though he had soon to be taken away. His father then

taught him all he could at home. The life of the Burns family was one of extreme hardship; for years no butcher meat was used at table, and Robert and his brother Gilbert toiled as mere labourers.

When their father died in 1784, he left, besides his widow, five children younger than the two brothers. Robert was just twenty-five at the time of his father's death, and three months previously had taken, with his brother Gilbert, a farm of over a hundred acres. This farm was known as Mossgiel, and was in the neighbouring parish of Mauchline. It did not produce much; the only thing that developed on it seems to have been Burns's own genius for poetry.

The friend from whom Burns rented Mauchline, Gavin Hamilton of Mauchline, was at feud with the minister of the parish. Burns joined with Hamilton in this quarrel, and wrote *The Holy Fair*, *The Twa Herds*, and *Holy Willie's Prayer*—three satires against intolerance. It was at the same time that he produced two very different poems, *The Cotter's Saturday Night* and *Hallowe'en*.

After staying four years at Mossgiel, Burns, disappointed at his want of success, thought to make his way by going as manager to a sugar-cane plantation in the West Indies. He had no money to pay for the passage, and his brother suggested that it might be raised by printing his poems. Burns followed his advice, and added a few new pieces. A small volume was then printed at Kilmarnock, in the autumn of 1786, for which he received twenty pounds.

When he was on the point of leaving for the West Indies, a kind letter reached him from Edinburgh, begging him to come to Edinburgh, and see what he could do. It had been written by a Doctor Thomas Blacklock, who himself had published some verse, and was attracted by Burns's volume. Burns thought this gave him some chance, and it would not take him from Scotland. He therefore went to Blacklock, who soon made friends for him at the University. Burns created a great sensation in the Edinburgh literary circle, and a second edition of his poems was published by subscription in 1727. He received for it nearly six hundred pounds, and at once sent two hundred to his brother at Mauchline. He then married Jean Armour, his faithful sweetheart, and took her to a new home in Ellisland, where he was able to keep two men and two women servants; and had, as stock, nine or ten milch cows, some young cattle, four horses, and several sheep. To help him with the farm, he undertook the work of an officer of the Excise, a step
led to no good results. The pay was only £50 a year,
many absences from home caused a neglect of the farm

work. While he was at the farm, Captain Grose, a famous antiquary, visited him, and explained that he was about to publish a book on the antiquities of Scotland. Burns instantly gave a legend of Galloway, and put it into verse for his book, as *Tam o' Shanter*.

In 1791, Burns was appointed to the Dumfries division of the Excise, with an increase of twenty pounds a year, and moved over, with his family, to a small house in the town. The change from the country-side, which he loved so well, did him no physical good; and he was more surrounded with temptations too strong for him to resist, which broke him down in both body and spirit. He lived only five years longer, through a sad time of poverty and ill-health, and died in July, 1796. His funeral was a public one, attended by a vast multitude; and a large sum, for his widow and four sons, was raised by subscriptions.

(4) The Poetry of Burns.

The poetry of Burns can be best considered if it is taken in accordance with its three divisions to which reference, has been already made. The first of these includes his earliest work up to the year 1786, when he was twenty-seven. The second is brief, covered by the two years until the end of 1788, and remarkable for the productive power that he then could exercise. The third and last are covered by the sad time extending from 1788 to 1796, the year of his death; yet, in spite of his physical decay, his mental faculties were bright and strong; the wonderful songs were then produced; and *Tam o' Shanter*, his masterpiece, composed in the winter of 1790, was begun and ended in one day. His wife related that she saw him by the river-side, repeating his lines to himself, and gesticulating and laughing as all their humorous incidents came into his mind.

A pretty love song well represents the early period, when Burns was a rosy-cheeked plough-boy, whistling his way along the furrows.

My Nannie, O.

"Behind yon hills where Lugar flows
'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has closed,
And I'll awa to Nannie, O.

The westlin wind blaws loud an' shrill
The night's baith mirk and rainy, O!
But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,
An' owre the hill to Nannie, O. . . .

Her face is fair, her heart is true,
As spotless as she's bonie, O:

'Mang, among. **Westlin**, whistling. **Baith**, both. **Mirk**, dark.

The op'ning gowan, wat wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nannie, O.

A country lad is my degree,
An' few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be,
I'm welcome ay to Nannie, O. . . .

Our auld guidman delights to view
His sheep and kye thrive bonie, O;
But I'm as blythe, that hauds his pleugh
And has nae care but Nannie, O.

Come weal, come woe, I care na by,
I'll tak what Heaven will sen' me, O;
Nae ither care in life have I,
But live, an' love my Nannie, O."

Gowan, the mountain daisy. **Kye**, cattle.
Ken, know. **Hauds**, holds. **Na by**, no more.

A pretty little song to his wife composed during their honeymoon is typical of the verses of the second division.

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw.

"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonny lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild woods grow, and rivers row
And mony a hill between,
But day and night, my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair;
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonny flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonny bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean."

Airts, directions. **Lo'e**, love. **Row**, roll. **Shaw**, a wood.

The verses which Burns wrote for Captain Grose—very typical of his third period—tell the story of how Tam o' Shanter endeavours to ride back to his wife one stormy night, after spending the evening in a carouse with a friend at an inn. He had a ford and a bridge to cross, and the way was rough and so was the night; but he galloped off merrily until he came across a strange adventure, and was only saved by his old mare.

"Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg—
A better never lifted leg—
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;

Skelpit, dashed on. **Dub**, a small pond.

Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glowering round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares.
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.
The lightnings flash from pole to pole,
Near and more near the thunders roll;
When, glimmering through the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seemed in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae, we'll face the devil!—
The swats sae reamed in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle.
But Maggie stood right sair astonished,
Till, by the heel and hand admonished,
She ventured forward on the light;
And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae Cotillon brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels:
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge;
He screwed the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.
As Tammie glowred, amazed and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew . . . .

Guid, good.
Crooning, humming low.
Sonnet, song or tune.
Glowering, staring; looking earnestly.
Bogles, ghosts.
Houlets, owls; owlets.
Bore, small hole.
Tippenny, twopenny ale.
Usquebae, whisky.
Swats, new ale.
Reamed, frothed.
Noddle, head.
Boddle, small coin, one-third of English penny.
Sair, sore.
Warlocks, wizards.
Brent, quite *brand* (burnt) new.
Frae, from.
Cotillon, a dignified and stately French dance, performed by four couples. A kind of quadrille.
Strathspey, a lively Scotch dance.
Winnock-bunker, window-seat.
Towzie, rough, shaggy.
Tyke, dog.
Gie, give.
Pipes, bagpipes.
Gart, made, caused.
Skirl, shriek, scream.
A', all.
Dirl, vibrate.

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,
Sic flights are far beyond her power,
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jade she was and strang),
And how Tam stood like ane bewitched,
And thought his very een enriched;
Even Satan glowred and fidged fu' fain,
And hotched and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither. . . .
As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When 'Catch the thief!' resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch screech and hollow. . . .
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the keystane o' the brig;
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running-stream they darena cross!
But ere the keystane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail."

Maun, must.
Cour, droop, cower.
Sic, such.
Lap, leaped.
Flang, flung, threw her limbs about.
Souple, supple, nimble.
Strang, strong.
Ane, one.
Een, eyes.
Fidged, fidgeted.
Fu', full.
Hotched, swayed his body to and fro.
Syne, then.
Tint, lost.
Fyke, fuss.
Herd, herd-boys.
Byke, hive.
Pussie, the hare.
Eldritch, unearthly, frightful.
Hollow, holloa, hollo.
Brig, bridge.
The fient, literally, the fiend; used figuratively for "not any."
Ettle, eagerness.
Wist, knew.
Ae spring, one jump.
Hale, safe and sound (whole).
Ain, own.

(5) William Blake (1757).

William Blake, the son of a hosier, was born at his father's house in Broad Street, Carnaby Market, near to Golden Square. The poverty of the household prevented William from getting any education, but he had a natural capacity for verse, and was gifted with a powerful imagination. Some lines bearing a very

modest title, are wonderful, both in idea and expression, for a boy of fourteen.

A Song.

"How sweet I roamed from field to field
And tasted all the summer's pride
Till I the Prince of Love beheld,
Who in the sunny gleams did glide.

"He showed me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow;
He led me through his garden fair,
Where all his golden pleasures grow.

"With sweet May-dews my wings are wet,
And Phœbus fired my vocal rage;
He caught me in his silken net,
And shut me in his golden cage.

"He loves to sit and hear me sing,
Then, laughing, sports and plays with me;
Then stretches out my golden wing,
And mocks my loss of liberty."

When Blake was ten years old, he was able to attend a drawing-school in the Strand, and four years later he was apprenticed to an engraver in Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. After he had been working there for two years, his master sent him to Westminster Abbey, and other churches in London, not only to copy the monuments that they contained, but to make drawings of certain parts of their building. A firm of publishers were about to bring out a book on Ecclesiastical Architecture, and drawings of this kind were to be used as illustrations. Blake's master had thought him clever enough to be entrusted with this work. This opinion proved correct, for the copies were excellent, and Blake was highly praised. At the end of his appenticeship he passed on to the Royal Academy, and soon formed friendships with Flaxman, Stothard, and Fuseli. Flaxman declared that Blake was as good a poet as he was a draughtsman; and Fuseli, then the most popular artist in London, was ever after his companion and friend.

In August, 1782, Blake, being then twenty-five, married a girl, who for all his days, proved a tender and a loving wife. She was, like himself, in poor circumstances, and had not received any education. A cross in the church register was all she could mark on the day of her wedding. With her husband's help she quickly learned to read and write, to print his engravings, and afterwards to colour them.

Blake was able before long to open an engraver's shop, and, in 1783, to go to the still greater delight of printing his *Poetical Sketches*. These little pieces, the accumulation of some years,

are of great interest, as showing with what admiration Blake had studied the Elizabethan poetry. There was an imitation of Spenser, an echo of Marlowe, and a ballad or two after the manner of some in Percy's *Reliques*. Here are a few lines in which Blake speaks entirely for himself.

To the Muses.

"Whether on Ida's shady brow,
Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the Sun, that now
From ancient melody have ceased;

"Whether in Heaven ye wander fair,
Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air
Where the melodious winds have birth.

"Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
Beneath the bosom of the sea,
Wandering in many a coral grove;
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry;

"How have you left the ancient love
That bards of old enjoyed in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move
The sound is forced, the notes are few!"

Still better work appeared in 1788, the *Songs of Innocence*, illustrated with Blake's own designs. The quaint Introduction, with its allegorical meaning, is one of his most effective poems.

"Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

"'Pipe a song about a Lamb!'
So I piped with merry cheer.
'Piper, pipe that song again;'
So I piped; he wept to hear.

"'Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer!'
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

"'Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read.'
So he vanished from my sight;
And I plucked a hollow reed,

"And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.'

A wonderful idea is expressed in

A Little Boy Found.

"A little boy lost in the lonely fen
Led by the wandering light
Began to cry, but God, ever nigh
Appeared like his father, in white.

"He kissed the child, and by the hand led
And to his mother brought,
Who in sorrow pale, through the lonely dale,
The little boy weeping sought."

Another volume, the *Songs of Experience*, published in 1794, describe, in a child's language, the horror of a man at the wickedness of the world. By reason of the extraordinary nature of his ideas, and yet by the simplicity with which the thoughts are expressed, he attained a unique place in English literature. His best art work really lay in his designs and drawing, rather than in his verses, and often made ideas plain which even he would hardly have been able to put into words. He seemed to attain to the true inspiration of the artist when he began to lose his skill in writing. He lived always a happy home life, and when, in his seventieth year, he died, one of those present declared, "I have been at the death, not of a man, but of an angel."

(6) The Rev. George Crabbe (1754-1832).

George Crabbe, born at Aldborough, in Suffolk, was the son of poor people; and, from his earliest days, was acquainted with the economies of impoverished lives. He was apprenticed to a surgeon when he was fourteen, and afterwards practised at Aldborough. But he never prospered in his profession, and resolved to go to London, and live by literature.

After a long struggle, he succeeded in attracting the attention of Burke, by whose aid his first work, *The Library*, was published in 1781. The poem was much liked, and Crabbe soon found himself in a position to take Holy Orders. Two years later he wrote *The Village*, and submitted it in manuscript to Johnson, who gave him some suggestions, and the poem, when published, made Crabbe's reputation. He had by this time been appointed to a living in the Eastern counties, and, after a long engagement, was able to marry his first love. He gave himself up entirely to parish work for twenty-two years, only writing one poem, *The Newspaper*, in 1785, and did not return to literature till 1807, when he published *The Parish Register*, and three years later surpassed it with *The Borough*. His later works were the *Tales in Verse*, published in 1812, and the *Tales of the Hall* in 1819.

Three years later he moved from the east of England over to the west, and spent the last twenty years of his life at Tunbridge in Wiltshire. That he gained an intimate acquaintance with two different aspects of English rural life is well illustrated by a comparison between *The Village* and *The Parish Register*. The first was an outburst of Crabbe's own feelings, as brought about by the experiences of his own early life. He had read a good deal of the false pastoral poetry which had been for so many years prevalent in England, but when he looked at the poverty in Norfolk, the swains of the *Faerie Quene* seemed like heartless burlesques. He could not realise that the economic conditions of England had largely changed during the space of time between the days of Elizabeth and the end of the eighteenth century.

The preliminary verses to *The Village* are consequently very bitter:

"The Village life, and every care that reigns
O'er youthful peasant and declining swains
What labour yields, and what, that labour past,
Age, in its hour of languor, finds at last
What form the real picture of the Poor,
Demand a song—the Muse can give no more.
Fled are those times, when in harmonious strains,
The rustic poet praised his native plains:
No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,
Their country's beauty, or their nymph's, rehearse;
Yet still for these, we frame the tender strain,
Still in our lays fond Corydons complain,
And shepherds' boys their amorous pains reveal,
The only pains, alas! they ever feel . . .
No; cast by fortune on a frowning coast,
Which neither groves nor happy valleys boast;
Where other cares than those the Muse relates,
And other shepherds dwell with other mates;
By such examples taught, I paint the cot,
As truth will paint it, and as bards will not;
Nor you, ye poor, of lettered scorn complain,
To you, the smoothest song is smooth in vain;
O'ercome by labour, and bowed down by time,
Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?
Can poets soothe you, when you pine for bread,
By winding myrtles round your ruin'd shed?—
Can their light tales your weighty griefs o'erpower,
Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome hour?
Lo! where the heath with withering brake grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its withered ears;
Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land, and rob the blighted eye;

Brake, shrubs and brambles.

There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;
There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil;
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade."

Bugloss, a weed known as the ox-tongue.
Mallow, a plant with sticky juice. The flower is used in medicine.
Charlock, wild mustard; very troublesome in grain fields.

Crabbe's word-painting of nature is close and accurate, as this description of a winter storm off the East Coast will show:

View now the winter storm!—above, one cloud,
Black and unbroken, all the skies o'ershroud;
The unwieldy porpoise through the day before
Had rolled in view of boding men on shore;
And sometimes hid and sometimes showed his form,
Dark as the cloud, and furious as the storm.
All where the eye delights yet dreads to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying foam
Upon the billows rising—all the deep
Is restless change; the waves so swelled and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken swells,
Nor one, one moment, in its station dwells:
But nearer land, you may the billows trace,
As if contending in their watery chase;
May watch the mightiest till the shoal they reach,
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch;
Curled as they come, they strike, with furious force,
And then, reflowing, take their grating course,
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past,
Rolled by their rage, and shall to ages last.
"Far off the petrel in the troubled way
Swims with her brood, or flutters in the spray;
She rises often, often drops again,
And sports at ease on the tempestuous main.
High o'er the restless deep, above the reach
Of gunners' hope, vast flocks of wild duck stretch;
Far as the eye can glance on either side,
In a broad space and level line they glide;
All in their wedge-like figures from the north
Day after day, flight after flight, go forth.
In-shore, their passage tribes of sea-gulls urge,
And drop for prey within the sweeping surge;
Oft in the rough opposing blast they fly
Far back, then turn and all their force apply,
While to the storm they give their weak complaining cry;
Or clap the sleek white pinion on the breast,
And in the restless ocean dip for rest."

Crabbe's metre was not the ordinary ten-syllable verse, but heroic couplets of a particular kind. Each couplet was com-

plete in itself, and what it said had to be said in the two lines. This will account for the large number of semicolons that are required in the punctuation of Crabbe's poetry. Crabbe never used the run-on line from one couplet to the next, which would have been regarded as slipshod, and in all such technical details his verse was deliberately thought out and carefully written.

Crabbe lived and wrote at a time when Odes and Lyrics were being brought back into English poetry, and when the so-called Romantic movement was beginning to exercise an influence on verse. Crabbe never attempted to imitate these things, and kept himself steadfastly to subjects of which he had genuine knowledge. He stands out as an example of a true and honest man; faithful to his flock; admirable in his purpose. He is classed as one of the great writers of England; and the influence of his poems was always for the good.

77. The Problems of the Eighteenth Century.

(1) The Position of Pope.

These give rise to questionings which are both numerous and difficult. Pope was long regarded as the typical poet of the century; while in modern times, such a view is hardly accepted. He is recognised as being very representative of a certain part of the century, yet by no means of the whole. His qualifications for the writing of poetry were sensitivity and keen expression. Every part of his work was tinged by the interests of the age. The *Essay on Man* was a metrical version of its religious beliefs; the *Satires* were comments on social conditions; and the translations from *Homer*, though they did not contain much Homer, expounded sundry political theories of the day.

(2) The Disbelief in Authority.

The *Essay on Man*, representing the Deism specially affected by Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke, was consequently a poem which had both to teach and to argue. Spenser and Milton when attempting their studies of man's moral nature, and of his place in the universe, fell back upon the old romances, or the record of the Bible. By the time of Pope, belief in both these sources had been entirely destroyed. All that he and his friends the philosophers could do, was to draw up a bare scheme of their own, and to argue as to its strength and likelihood. From such work, feeling or emotion were necessarily absent.

Yet, after Pope's death in 1744, his methods were followed for many years by second-rate poets. The heroic couplet, extremely difficult to write well, and impossible for any one else *to use so* neatly as Pope, is nevertheless easy to produce in a *slipshod fashion*. The direct followers of Pope consequently

brought out a mass of poor verse, while other men produced things that were more original.

(3) The Transition Period.

This period began about the middle of Pope's life, and may be said to have lasted until 1775 or 1780. In it, the tastes and methods of bygone days were not entirely exhausted; and new feelings and ideas began to appear.

Young, Akenside, and Thomson preferred to employ blank verse, although their mastery of it was far from perfect. One failing, common to all of them, was that their instincts were not sufficiently strong to keep them from falling into shallow declamation. Thomson had the power of presenting truthful and vivid pictures of nature. Yet this was not so much because he cared for it; he preferred it to town as being a quieter place, and more convenient for the discussion of Moral Philosophy.

Young allowed his fancy and natural thought to become subordinated to wit and ingenuity, and so conveyed to his verse a touch of insincerity. He had too keen an appreciation of his own ability, and was never satisfied unless it attracted attention. He was not content to do his best, and let it take its fate; he pointed out the beauty of his own verses, and desired them to be praised.

Akenside thought that the separation of philosophical from imaginative work had been hurtful to each, and asserted that, at the time of the Revolution of 1688, Locke had led one party, and Dryden the other. Akenside believed that the partial reunion between philosophy and literature had produced a good result, and did all that lay in his power to make his own work tend towards the same object. He was not incorrect in his theory, though at the time that he wrote, neither poetry nor philosophy were in a fit condition for change.

The philosophy of the eighteenth century had little of life or warmth. Unlike the older philosophies, it could not be represented by symbolism. Emotional feeling, in the country, was nearly extinct, and an age that was unable to produce an epic could only write verse of a didactic kind. When a change came in thought, and verse with some emotional feeling was written, didactic poetry immediately perished.

(4) The Classical Poets—Collins and Gray.

The return to a study of the classics, which influenced many men in the early years and middle of the century, did much to break the fading authority of Pope. Correct form alone, as advocated by him, came to be regarded as insufficient. Beautiful verse had to be added to it, and for such a combination, men

like Collins and Gray worked diligently and well. Their *Odes*, written between 1746 and 1757, proved that the spirit of the classics could be expressed in English forms. The finish of their style was different from any that had yet appeared, and was achieved without any loss of natural expression. Verse writers at last came to see that to make their verse poetry, it was necessary for nature and art to work hand in hand. Art without nature might produce a correct verse, which would be deficient in feeling. Nature without art might be emotional and pathetic, though there was a danger of crudeness in form.

(5) Revival of Feeling for Nature.

Great as was the influence of Collins and Gray, it was hardly one that appealed to the bulk of the nation. A sound classical training was necessary for those who wished to thoroughly understand their *Odes*.

A movement, far more widely spread, was brought about by a revival of the old feeling for nature, frequent in Anglo-Saxon poetry, and appearing in many Middle English verses. With Chaucer's poems it reached its highest intellectual point; yet after his time, as trade and commerce increased, the feeling disappeared. Trade, brought into England by the Danes, had developed to such an extent, that after the death of Edward III., mercantile questions began to be of the utmost importance. In the reign of his son, merchants formed a definite class of the community, a middle class, between the old divisions of Gentle and Simple. The new class held considerable political power, for they were useful to the King as a source of revenue. They were, however, always antagonistic to the rural population. For the long period between Chaucer and Shakspere, the Scotch people kept up their poetry, which delighted in rural life and rural occupations; while in England, the fifteenth century was the most wanting in verse, the popular ballad being the only kind of any life, and it is not until the earlier part of the sixteenth century that we find the arrival of Hawes and Skelton. The later part of the century developed the magnificent stage of the English drama, and the seventeenth century saw the days of Milton. Self-satisfaction injured the nation after the Revolution of 1688, and led to a stoppage of rural and emotional poetry, when those who called themselves the followers of Pope took the lead with the artificial verse, which succeeded the didactic verse of previous years.

(6) The Romantic Movement.

In the second half of the century, an influence arose, hardly realised by later generations. Chaucer was read again with

pleasure; Spenser had many admirers. Thomson, in 1728, with his *Castle of Indolence*; Shenstone, with his *Schoolmistress*, in 1742; and Beattie's *Minstrel*, of 1774, all followed in the lines of the Spenserian stanza. Shakspere was studied, and a knowledge was acquired of a History of English Poetry. The issue, in 1765, of Percy's *Reliques* of the old songs and ballads, has been declared the Bible of a much-talked of change, the Romantic movement. We shall soon consider the possible origin of this movement, which has been unnecessarily entangled with the French Revolution of 1789.

(7) The French Revolution—Rousseau.

For a long period the eighteenth century was looked upon as the forerunner of the Revolution, while modern times have come to think that it was more anxious to preserve old customs than to adopt new theories.

Still, it was seen that while those theories could never be adopted in their entirety, they would exercise a power over the older doctrines; and Europe saw that it was her best work to effect compromises, and, as it has been excellently put, to "provide a safe transition from the manners of mediæval to modern times." The eighteenth century is better regarded as a link in the development of nations, than as a century of revolutionary tastes.

Men asked each other what was the real basis for a society, and what limitations should be laid upon liberty. The poetry of the eighteenth century was, with few exceptions, entirely unimaginative. Its duty was only to deal with social and political themes. Its contrast to the earlier poetry is unmistakable. The work of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspere, and Milton, show an acquaintance with thought and feeling that ranges over the whole of human life. The satires of Dryden and Pope, the poems of Johnson, and to a certain extent of Goldsmith, are kept entirely to their own nation and their own time. Towards the end of the century, a definite feeling of revolt arose, shown in the political world by Wilkes; in the religious world by Wesley; and in the poetical world by Burns. The democratic spirit inculcated by Rousseau, which caused individuals to attempt a break with society, hardly touched England at all. There is a little taint of it to be found in Cowper, with his strange mixture of Methodism and love for nature; though the necessity for his life as a recluse, and his brain affection, had probably much to do with the cause. England had gone through her own experiences in 1649 and 1688, and was too sensible to allow the way to be paved for troubles like those of France in 1789.

It is necessary to say a few words with regard to Jean Jacques Rousseau. He was born in Geneva in 1712. His father, a watchmaker, implanted in him a liking for Republicanism, while his natural capacities gave him a taste for literature. He made himself conspicuous, by winning, in his thirty-eighth year, a prize offered by the Academy of Dijon for an essay on the question whether the Revival of Learning had made any improvement in morals. Rousseau argued that it had not, and many readers had accepted his conclusions. Three years later he issued another essay reproving society for its sins, and praising the state of nature. This essay persuaded many to glorify man as he had been before he was perverted by culture. "The noble savage" was glorified in literature as a protest against civilised life. Rousseau cast aside all sense of duty and took sensibility as the guide of humanity. "The heart," he said, "is good; listen to it; you will never stray." France was flooded with a stream of sickly and unwholesome sentiment, which became dangerous when, in 1762, Rousseau poured it into his *Contrat Social*, supposed to be an exposition of the English settlement of 1689. Rousseau advocated the sovereignty of all, which he declared could be established by adopting the Social Contract, and recommended that the general voice might ordain articles of religion, "not as dogmas, but as sentiments of sociability." Few Englishmen accepted this travesty of their country's constitution, and those who did, learnt to regret their folly. The *Contrat Social*, however, created a great sensation on the Continent, and to a certain extent spread a vague belief in the theory that every man was exactly the same as every other.

XX. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

78. The Romances of Nature and Man.

It is to be borne in mind that periods of literature do not necessarily change with the exact beginning or end of any particular century. The last years of one almost always have an influence upon the early years of the next; and it is not difficult to understand how the ten years between 1790 and 1800 may be taken together, and how much their work had to do with the first long period of the present century.

The horror and disgust which spread over Europe at the excesses of 1789 led to many of the changes which took place; until the military despotism, an inevitable result of a revolution, was destroyed, chiefly by the hands of England, in 1815. The lessons learnt from these experiences touched England very lightly. She secured her own peace by a constitutional change in 1832; and, five years later, by an emotional feeling which

arose in the British empire on the beginning of an entirely new period. All these changes came about by the course of events, though they were often attributed to the teaching of Rousseau. His doctrines upon nature and man were supposed to have influenced Europe to such a degree, that he was responsible for all the movements which agitated the civilised world, and he was especially regarded as having been the "Father of Romance." Yet the romantic feeling in England had a pedigree considerably longer than Rousseau's; and an accomplished critic of the present day has proved that, even in the time of Chaucer, it was familiar to the English.

The question of origin, however, is not so important as what the name Romanticism may mean. It has been described as an "extraordinary development of imaginative sensibility," a phrase too pompous to be quite accurate. It is perhaps more moderate to regard it as the power of discovering and appreciating the hidden meaning of things, and then we can recognise that this was a spirit to which the eighteenth century was essentially hostile. The reason is not far to seek.

The Revolution of 1688 destroyed a great many loyal and imaginative beliefs. The whole literary work of the eighteenth century, from Addison to Johnson, had laid aside the romantic element prevalent in previous years. Addison could only write his clever papers on "Sir Roger de Coverley" as a description of feudal service. Dr. Johnson, seventy years later, looked at the matter from a more serious point of view. He was able to perceive that the theories of the *Contrat Social* had no true basis, and that "without the established order implied by a sense of reality, civilised society cannot exist." "Sir," said Johnson, speaking on this point, "Rousseau was a very bad man."

It was principally to the growing masses of the English middle class that the French revolutionary theories were attractive. They had, long before the outburst of the Revolution, been keenly discontented with their position; and looked upon their condition as dull and lacking in pleasure. A search for something that would stimulate the imagination was set on foot, and several of the poets who began to write during the middle and last years of the eighteenth century seem to have been touched with the vague promises held out by Rousseau's followers.

Collins' *Odes to Liberty* and *Peace* were slightly tainted, though he died too early to know anything about the Revolution; while Gray during his life, absorbed in classical work, combined with a genuine love for the beautiful in nature, never wasted his time over impracticable theories. Burns to some extent was affected, his imagination being appealed to rather than his intellect.

One result is worthy of notice. The growing wish for a life brighter than ordinary existence led many to desire a separation from dull surroundings, to pass their days in thought and reflection. This is shown in the early verse, and in the life of Wordsworth. Byron represented the other extreme. His love for a life of adventure and brave exploits was inherited, and the sorrows of his own life had made him rebel against ordinary conventions. Scott's fine nature, and his admiration for bygone times, desired that freedom of thought and spirit should be permitted to a nation, if due respect was paid to crown and law. Shelley, writing on imaginative lines, with no knowledge of the actual world, condemned all instituted things as obstacles to human happiness. The three or four poems on which Coleridge's fame rests were all purely romantic and lacking reality.

The romantic movement in England was much more a revival of the old English feeling than anything that can be attributed to the doctrines of Rousseau; while the movement with regard to Man hardly troubled England at all. The results of the French Revolution were sufficient to warn her against any constitutional change. On the Continent, it doubtless helped to spread the democratic idea; though Napoleon's grasp of empire, and attack upon Europe broke down the fancy for universal humanity, and brought about a strong national development. Spain, Italy, and Germany were restored to their places among the nations, while England peaceably managed her own affairs.

79. The Romantic Poets.

(1) William Wordsworth (1770-1850).

Wordsworth, the son of an attorney, was born at Cockermouth in 1770, and at eight years old was sent to Hawkshead School, where he boarded with a village dame. Being under no sort of discipline, he wandered about among the hills and dales, and developed a strong liking for the country-side. In 1787 he entered at St. John's College, Cambridge; and during his first long vacation returned to his old haunts near Esthwaite Lake. He went to many rustic dances, and enjoyed himself thoroughly, yet the grave bent of his nature showed itself plainly when once, on walking home at sunrise, the thought came to him how

> "The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
> The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
> Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
> And in the meadows and the lower grounds
> Was all the sweetness of a common dawn—
> Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
> And *labourers going forth to till the fields.*"

From that moment he looked upon himself as a "dedicated spirit"; the poet of nature and of man.

When he was twenty, he took a walking tour through France and Switzerland, where, coming into contact with Republican principles, he readily absorbed the theories of Freedom and Equality. His susceptibility to such influences resulted from an entire lack of discipline in his childhood. His ignorance was revealed by his prophecy as to the result of the fall of the Bastile.

> "For lo! the dread Bastile
> Fell to the ground, by violence overthrown
> Of indignation, and with shouts that drowned
> The crash it made in falling! From the wreck
> A golden palace rose, or seemed to rise,
> The appointed seat of equitable law
> And mild paternal sway. . . . Meanwhile, prophetic harps
> In every grove were ringing, 'War shall cease;
> Did ye not hear that conquest is abjured?
> Bring garlands, bring forth choicest flowers to deck
> The Tree of Liberty!'"

So Wordsworth wrote in 1789. Four years later he fled from Paris, to evade a prison and the guillotine.

On leaving Cambridge, he lived for a little while in London; until, again attracted by the charm of France, he went over to Orleans in November, 1791. Wordsworth then formed an intimate friendship with General Beaupuis, a Republican officer; and visited Paris in the October of the following year, a month after the September massacres. He was so led away by enthusiasm for the Republic, that he offered himself as a leader to the Girondists, a party consisting of the more moderate members of the National Convention, who chiefly came from the Gironde, the estuary of the Garonne. They were men of impracticable ideas, though they were not prepared to go to the length of the Jacobins; but when their denunciation was announced by Robespierre, Danton, and Marat, the Jacobin leaders, Wordsworth's eyes were opened as to the real results of the Revolution. His relations had just come to the same conclusion; and, by stopping Wordsworth's allowance, compelled him to return at once to England.

When nearly nineteen thousand persons had been guillotined, and the Reign of Terror was followed by a military despotism, Wordsworth realised that, if he could not live in France, it was safer to exist under the English Constitution. He consoled himself by writing a small volume of verse, issued in 1793; where the lines on *Guilt and Sorrow* showed the harm that had been worked in him by his French experiences.

Wordsworth, at this time in a morbid and unhealthy condition, was only rescued by the common-sense of his sister

Dorothy. She found him under the influence of a bad course of reading; and insisted on his accompanying her at once into Somersetshire, where with great patience she helped him to cultivate a sympathetic imagination, and to lay aside his dull observation. Dorothy Wordsworth had the gift of insight into the meaning of the ordinary conditions of life; and when Wordsworth at last understood what she had done for him, he wrote of her:

> "She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
> And humble cares, and delicate fears,
> A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,
> And love, and thought, and joy."

He then found himself able to compose his *Ruined Cottage*, a poem of much merit, afterwards included in the first book of *The Excursion*. In 1795 he made the acquaintance of Coleridge, and by the next year their intimacy was complete. Wordsworth and his sister soon after moved to Alfoxden, in Somersetshire, near the Quantock Hills, and became close neighbours of the Coleridges.

It was in the early part of Wordsworth's career that Coleridge had been attracted by his gift of "spreading the atmosphere of the ideal world over familiar forms and incidents." He therefore proposed that they should join in writing a book of poems, setting aside the poetic diction of the eighteenth century, which Wordsworth had taken more pains to avoid than many others had taken to produce. Wordsworth agreed to this suggestion; and between them they published a volume, in 1798, entitled *Lyrical Ballads*, which treated supernatural subjects as real, while prosaic subjects were surrounded with the loftiest ideas. The book had a small sale, and was received with sneers and abuse; yet its issue was the first definite attempt to revise the old romantic movement.

Wordsworth, in his Preface to the Second Edition, went still further, and declared that his intention was to "awaken the mind from the lethargy of custom," and to expound truths which the ordinary intellect, without the assistance of the poet, would never have the power to see. Wordsworth announced that he would "choose incidents and situations from common life," and put them "to the mind in an unusual way." These theories set the methods of all other poets at defiance. Wordsworth proposed to deal with simple matters, but to present them in a manner previously unknown.

To all readers of Wordsworth the result is familiar. It will be enough to say that Wordsworth subjected himself to a large amount of ridicule; and that though he clung tenaciously to his theory, producing masses of dreary and pedantic verse, there

were moments when a happy inspiration seized him, and he was able to sing the exquisite strains that have ranked him with the Immortals. *The Excursion*, while containing much that is heavy and dull, has passages of attractive thought, harmoniously expressed, among which a description of certain Greek deities ranks very high.

"In that fair clime the lonely herdsman, stretched
On the soft grass through half a summer's day,
With music lulled his indolent repose:
And, in some fit of weariness, if he,
When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetched,
Even from the blazing chariot of the Sun,
A beardless Youth, who touched a golden lute,
And filled the illumined groves with ravishment.
The nightly hunter, lifting a bright eye
Up towards the crescent moon, with grateful heart
Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
That timely light to share his joyous sport:
And hence, a beaming Goddess with her Nymphs,
Across the lawn and through the darksome grove,
Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes,
By echo multiplied by rock and cave,
Swept in the storm of chase; as moon and stars
Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven,
When winds are blowing strong. The traveller slaked
His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thanked
The Naiad. Sunbeams, upon distant hills
Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.
The Zephyrs fanning, as they passed, their wings
Lacked not, for love, fair objects whom they wooed
With gentle whisper. Withered boughs grotesque,
Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
In the low vale, or on steep mountain side;
And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring horns
Of the live deer, or goat's depending beard,—
These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood
Of gamesome deities; or Pan himself,
The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring God!"

The lovely wanderer, Diana, the moon.
Pan, the god of shepherds, huntsmen, and all inhabitants of the country.

The Wordsworths had a pleasant change in the winter of 1798, when they went with Coleridge to Germany, and stayed at Goslar, near to the Harz mountains. It was then that Wordsworth wrote some of his best poems, and planned *The Prelude, or the Growth of a Poet's Mind*, which he dedicated to Coleridge.

After his marriage in 1802 he resolved upon a longer poem of philosophical thought, to be called *The Recluse*, and to consist of three parts; but only the second was finished, and published under the name of *The Excursion*. *The Prelude* had been intended as an introduction to the whole. It was not completed until 1805, and *The Excursion* was published nine years later.

The Excursion, of 1814, was meant to form the second part of *The Recluse*; it consisted of nine books, of which the first contained the Introduction and the story of *The Ruined Cottage*. The next three told of the sceptic of Blea Tarn, and of Wordsworth's attempt to overcome despondency by cultivating imagination amid scenes of nature. In Books V. and VI. the Pastor relates stories of the dead folk who lie in the churchyard. The remaining books were essentially didactic, advocating the control of evils which hindered moral growth, and demanding an enlargement of education.

Of Wordsworth's later poems, *The White Doe of Rylstone*, written in 1807, did not appear till 1815. *The Sonnets on the River Duddon*, in 1820; *The Sonnet on King's College Chapel*, 1822; and two *Evening Voluntaries*, *Calm is the Fragrant Air*, and *By the Sea-Side*, of 1832 and 1833. These, among many others, gave evidence of the excellence of his work when he had reached his prime.

The last twenty years of his life were spent in quietude. Some family troubles occurred at one part of the time, yet were alleviated by the pleasure he received by the general recognition of his work. Oxford, in 1839, conferred upon him an honorary D.C.L., and on the death of Southey, in 1843, he was made Poet Laureate. He died in 1850, and was buried in the churchyard of Grasmere, among the hills and dales he loved so well.

The greatest merit of Wordsworth's poetry lies in the simplicity of its style, and the purity of its thought. He possessed a power of happy phrase, belonging only to the best poets; and could convey, in the simplest and shortest of words, the great truths underlying the common experiences of life:

"She dwelt among the untrodden ways,
Beside the springs of Dove;
A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love. . . .

"She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh!
The difference to me!"

It is necessary to notice some few points with regard to Wordsworth's attitude on the questions of nature and man. Pope and his contemporaries had held that the "proper study

of mankind is man." If they treated of nature at all, it was without sympathy, with little genuine observation, and an entire lack of any knowledge of her meaning.

A few men tried to bring about a change; Cowper even achieving his memorable line,

"God made the country, and man made the town."

Yet Wordsworth was the first to speak of nature as a living organism, and to treat of her influence on the minds of men. In many ways he entertained conceptions similar to those of the old Greek mythology, which saw in nature the home of divine beings, and peopled every stream and mountain with divinities. This is illustrated in the passage already quoted from *The Excursion*.

Wordsworth laid special stress on the fact that nature was ready to give much which many were unwilling or unable to receive, though she will only reciprocate to observing eyes and an open heart. In his lines *On Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth wrote,

". . . The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
A feeling and a love."

He went still further, insisting upon an after-process of inward reflection upon all that had been seen or felt. The emotion excited by the actual scene may be entirely changed, and a sorrowful feeling may arise for a time, though from such sadness a higher joy in the end will follow.

Wordsworth lived a pure and simple life, always believing that he was called by heaven to produce some great work. He was gifted with a sweet sympathy for women and children; being in many ways, by the receptivity of his nature, very like a child himself. His experiences in the time of the French Revolution worked eventually for his good. There grew up in him a hatred for lawless revolt and a genuine patriotism for his own country. He cast aside the vague humanitarianism of Rousseau; and set before himself, as a special task, the work of teaching the connection between nature and mankind. He urged that man's suffering might be eased by the calm of nature; a phase of character, marking him out from the poets of the early and middle parts of the eighteenth century. This phase was well described by Keats, who spoke of it as "explorative of the dark passages" in our thoughts.

Wordsworth fell into the error of thinking that a poet could produce good poetry by merely sitting down to write. He overlooked the fact that great poetry depends upon inspiration

which touches the poet's mind, and compels him to write; and, if such an impulse be wanting, the result is not poetry, but tedious verse. This want of perception seems to be the only thing that can account for the strange contrast existing between the different parts of Wordsworth's work; for, while he produced many passages of the highest poetry, he was at the same time responsible for much prosaic verse.

It is, however, always better to admire the good points of a poet's real poetry than it is to carp at the errors of his verse. When Wordsworth was working under inspiration, a frequent occurrence, then he wrote truly and well. We judge his position as a poet, not by his ordinary verses, but by the exquisite results that his real power over poetry gave him. Three instances of such results are notable. When his eldest son was preparing for his Cambridge examination, Wordsworth read a good number of the classical authors with him. For many years he had not touched his Greek or Latin, and the pleasure of doing so again with his own lad renewed the old associations and remembrances. He had been an ardent admirer of the sad tale of *Laodamia*, and, with a genuine inspiration, turned its tragedy into an excellent poem. The husband of Laodamia leaves her for the Trojan War, and is slain in battle by Hector. The grief of Laodamia becomes so great, that even the gods have pity upon her, and tell the husband that he may visit her on the earth for three hours, on the condition that he does not stay one moment longer. The first verse gives her prayer to Jupiter. Protesilaus, she hears in reply, is to come that very day. Wild with joy, she waits impatiently for the hour; and the happy hours, seeming only like three minutes, pass like magic away. Hermes, the heavenly messenger, returns, and bids Protesilaus to come. Protesilaus cannot refuse. Hermes leads him away, and the despairing Laodamia falls a corpse upon the palace-floor.

Laodamia.

"'With sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired:
And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered lord have I required:
Celestial pity I again implore;—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore!' . . .

"Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes reappears!
Round the dear shade she would have clung—'tis vain.
The hours are past—too brief, had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, through the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse she lay. . . .

"... Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight."

The second and the third are sonnets, a form of verse specially cultivated by Wordsworth, and useful to him as guiding his lines and concentrating his thought. The second represents a passing shadow upon Wordsworth's mind, when it seems to him that modern times are of less worth and interest than the ancient classical; the third, when he is fascinated by the beautiful aspect of London, as seen from the river, and when the consciousness of the mass of humanity lying at rest excites and touches his sympathy.

"The World is too much with us."

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not—Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn."

Sonnet Composed upon Westminster Bridge.

"Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty;
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep,
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!"

(2) Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834).

Of all Wordsworth's contemporaries, the most celebrated was the romantic poet Coleridge.

As a child he had shown traces of a quaint fancy; and when, in his early manhood, he attempted the study of politics, metaphysics, and theology, it was only to find that, in pleasure and profit, they all sank before the "shaping spirit" of Imagination. By the death of his father, who had been a clergyman in Devonshire, Samuel was left an orphan when quite a child; and had to go for his education to Christ's Hospital, the Blue-Coat School, where he did so well, as to be able to pass on to Jesus College, Cambridge.

After a year at the University, he won a gold medal for a Greek Ode; and in 1793, being then in his twenty-first year, began his career as a poet with the *Songs of the Pixies* and the *Lines on an Autumnal Evening*. Even these early verses showed the beginning of a spiritualised perception of nature, for Coleridge did not merely record her charms, he was able to read the hidden meaning of all her works.

Upon his return to College at the beginning of his second year, he found his bill amounted to over a hundred pounds. He was hampered for money by other expenses as well, and in despair left the University. Not knowing what else to do, he turned to the service, enlisting under an assumed name as a trooper in the 15th Light Dragoons. His comrades and officers all liked him; and he was happy in many ways, until a fit of melancholy disturbed him, and he scribbled a Latin verse on the white-washed wall of the regimental stables. Here it was seen by the captain of his troop, a good scholar, and son of the Dean of Winchester, who made inquiries of the writer as to his identity; and obtained a discharge for him in April, 1794.

Coleridge returned to Cambridge in the following June, and became acquainted with Southey, then an undergraduate at Oxford; and with the assistance of another friend, Lovel, the three agreed to compose a tragedy on *The Fall of Robespierre*, of which each was to write one act. Southey, in the same year, published a revolutionary poem on *Wat Tyler*; and England not seeming a worthy home for persons of such spirit as themselves, Coleridge proposed that they should leave for the New World, to establish a community on the shores of the Susquehannah. This was to be known as the Pantisocracy, the place of equal government by all, which, it was declared, would involve the good of all. The most important part of the scheme was, as both Southey and Lovel agreed, that to so young a colony it would be impossible to go as single men. It was therefore settled that they should each marry one of three sisters, with whom they were all acquainted; and Miss Sarah Fricker, of Bristol, became Mrs. Coleridge in October, 1795.

An obstacle, unfortunately, stood in the way. A lack of

funds pressed upon all the future managers of the colony. Coleridge, who had lately turned Unitarian, started to go round the country preaching, and trying to obtain subscribers for a new journal to be called *The Watchman*. The first number appeared on the 1st of March, 1796, the last on the 15th of May.

Two poems belonging to these are characteristic of Coleridge's mental condition. The first, written on Christmas Eve of 1794, described by the author as a desultory poem, dealt with *Christ's Prayer on the Cross, The War of* 1794, *The French Revolution, The Millenium*, and *The Hope of Universal Redemption*. To say that the Revolution is described as the "Triumph of Infinite Love," which, "diffused through all, makes all one whole," sufficiently explains the value of Coleridge's arguments. The only value of the poem was that it showed a distinct advance in his writing of verse. *Lewti, or The Circassian Love Chant*, written in 1795, was a more satisfactory piece of work. Practical questions were left untouched, and Coleridge gave in it his first good example of imaginative power, with a distinct skill in the use of words.

His best period developed when, on the last day of 1796, he moved to Nether Stowey, on the shore of the Bristol Channel, with his wife and infant daughter. The result of a settled and happy life made him a real poet in eighteen months. The acquaintance with the Wordsworths began, and the days of the *Lyrical Ballads* arrived. While Wordsworth was revising his Ballads, Coleridge produced two excellent Odes, the first being an *Ode to the Departing Year*, written just before he settled at Nether Stowey, and an *Ode to France*, in 1798, lamenting the mistakes he had fallen into in his views of the French Revolution.

A second group of short poems was even better. *The Lime-Tree Bower* was written on a day when he realised

> "That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;
> No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
> No waste so vacant, but may well employ
> Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
> Awake to Love and Beauty."

Frost at Midnight is a pretty little poem of his meditations on a winter's night, when, the rest of the household being asleep, he sat watching his infant in her cradle.

> "All seasons shall be sweet to thee,
> Whether the summer clothe the general earth
> With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
> Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
> Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch

Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eve-drops fall,
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet moon."

The Fears of Solitude, written in February, 1798, during the alarm of an invasion of England, begin with some effective lines upon the charm and peace of the English country, and pass into a lament of the harm and danger that such a calamity would bring upon her. His only trust is in the God of nature, for the evening scene allays his fear, and leads him back to hope. At the same time, about the middle of the period, came his marvellous poem, *Kubla Khan*. It resulted from a dream, so that only fifty-four lines were remembered. The following form the beginning and ending of the poem:

"In Xanadu, did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea. . . .

"The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision there I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, 'Beware! beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.'"

In September, 1798, the household at Nether Stowey was given up, and Coleridge, with the Wordsworths, went to Germany. Here he found an answer to all the intellectual questions which had agitated his youth; and the rest of his life was ted in attempting to distinguish between Imagination and r. The result was that Coleridge's imaginative powers

decreased as his acquaintance with German philosophy increased. The only time when he wrote any characteristic verse resulted from a visit to the Brocken. After his return to England, the *Ode to Dejection* pathetically declared that Wordsworth's belief in nature was not strong enough to heal or restore. The last part of his life saw the production of several small pieces of verse which spoke, with infinite pathos, of his hopes and fears. He lived until 1834, a martyr to opium, for many years of his later life having been tended by his circle of friends at Highgate.

Neither Wordsworth nor Coleridge can be properly understood, unless due regard is paid to one of the tendencies of the eighteenth century. In both France and England, the dominant way of thinking was held to be empirical; which meant that all our ideas were derived from experience, and through the senses alone. The Transcendentalist believed that the Mind contributed to its own stores, ideas, or forms of thoughts, that were not derived from experience. There were two ways of escape from the empirical methods of the century. One was by Ecclesiasticism, where an appeal was made to Authority; the other by Transcendentalism, when the appeal was made to an inner light. The authority, according to Coleridge, should have come from the understanding to the reason; according to Wordsworth, from the understanding to imaginative faith. Whatever terms might have been employed, a common result was arrived at; that, by the natural order of things, a Divine presence was ever within and around us, breathing throughout the universe, yet declaring itself more strongly in the spirit of man. This difference between them accounts for their varying conceptions of a poet and his work.

Coleridge represented the Romantic movement, as Wordsworth represented the Naturalistic. Both were dissatisfied with life as they knew it, and each sought for relief in a different way. Wordsworth looked beneath the surface of daily experiences, and discovered an amplitude of hitherto unnoticed thoughts and feelings. Coleridge looked to earlier times, and sought to bring back their wonders. Wordsworth had more power of producing thought than Coleridge; but Coleridge surpassed him in vivid narrative, in his striking use of weird and terrible things, and in the melody of his verse. To both men the universe seemed alive and divine, though they reached this same point by different ways. Wordsworth found his objects of reflection in things that were familiar and usual; Coleridge took them from the uncommon experiences of life. Wordsworth owed to Coleridge a certain softening influence, which gave him something more of human tenderness than he naturally pos-

sessed; and Coleridge benefited to some extent, by accepting for a time, Wordsworth's deep belief in the healing powers of nature. The German influence destroyed this hope for Coleridge, and his one faith—that happiness could only come from the soul itself—was expressed in his poem of *Dejection*.

We turn now to the two remarkable poems in which the methods of Coleridge's comparatively later work were so clearly displayed. They were wild tales of Romance and Faerie Land, ranking high in poetic quality and beauty of form. *The Ancient Mariner* dealt with marvellous events in a manner unknown to the older ballads. The main story of a weird tragedy at sea, told to an unwilling listener, a marriage guest, is broken into every now and then by sounds of merriment from the marriage feast proceeding on shore; and ends at last amidst the lights and clear sounds of the bay, when the greater part of its terror has fled.

The second story, *Christabel*, is a fragment like *Kubla Khan*. Christabel, the daughter of a rich baron, dreams sadly of a young knight to whom she is betrothed, and leaves her room at midnight to pray for her lover in a holy place. She goes to the foot of an old oak-tree, standing about a furlong from the castle gate; and, on kneeling down, is startled to hear a moan. She hastens to the other side of the tree, to find there a beautiful lady in distress. Horrified at the sight, she leads her to the castle and gives her food and shelter. It soon appears from the poem that the lady is no more than a witch; and, had *Christabel* been finished, there would probably have been a tragic conclusion.

"'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awaken'd the crowing cock,
Tu-whit!—Tu-whoo!
And hark again, the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew. . . .

"The lovely lady Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothèd knight;
Dreams that made her moan and leap
As on her bed she lay in sleep;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

"She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak
But moss, and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

"The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near as near can be,
But what it is, she cannot tell.
On the other side it seems to be
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree . . .

"Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak—
What sees she there?

"There she sees a damsel bright,
Dressed in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck and arms were bare;
Her blue-vein'd feet unsandall'd were,
And wildly glitter'd here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly! . . .

". . . In her arms the maid she took,
Ah, well-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
'In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare
That in the dim forest,
Thou heard'st a low moaning,
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;
And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
To shield and to shelter her from the damp air.'"

(3) Robert Southey (1774-1843).

The father of Southey belonged to an ancient family, who were entitled to bear coat-armour, but falling into poverty, had to make their living by trade. Robert, born at Bristol in 1774, could not be given any education, until he was assisted by his great-aunt, Miss Tyler, and his uncle, the Rev. Herbert Hill. Their joint help sent Southey to Westminster, whence he was expelled for making a joke in the College magazine against the head-master. His uncle, who thought Robert had been unfairly treated, sent him to Balliol, where he became notorious by a zeal for the French Revolution, and a constant declaration that he intended to do all he could to re-organise the world. He had

been affected by the study of Lucan and Rousseau, and still more by Epictetus, with whose writings he avowed his "very heart was engrained."

The result of these studies was an epic of *Joan of Arc*, in the manner of Lucan, whose Joan posed as a champion of republicanism. In the same year Southey produced a dramatic version of the legend of *Wat Tyler*, and meeting with Coleridge in Oxford during the spring of 1794, embraced the doctrines of Pantisocracy. A change of thought was soon brought about by a trip through Spain and Portugal in 1795 and 1796. *Joan of Arc* was not published until the latter year, and then had been strengthened by four hundred lines of mystical science from the pen of Coleridge.

Southey's travels had taken him into the romance of ancient Spain, and after 1796 he wrote several of his ballads; in 1801, finishing his epic of *Thalaba*. This poem, based on Mahomedan legends, was the best that he had ever yet written. Southey, although his preface upheld the use of blank verse as being "the noblest measure of which our language is capable," thought it better to use for his tale an unrhymed line of varying length; the first stanza showed his intention very clearly.

"How beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air,
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain,
Breaks the serene of Heaven:
In full orb'd glory yonder moon divine
Rolls through the dark blue depths.
Beneath her steady ray
The desert circle spreads,
Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky.
How beautiful is night!"

On these lines Shelley subsequently modelled the opening passage of his own *Queen Mab*.

In 1803 Southey went to live at Greta Hall, Keswick, where the Coleridge family were settled, and where Coleridge himself was an occasional visitor. The intimacy between Coleridge and Southey had by this time come to an end; but Southey gained the friendship of Wordsworth. His *Madoc* was completed in 1805, where he traced the adventures of a Welsh Prince on the continent now known as South America.

Lucanus Ocellus, an ancient philosopher, whose date is unknown. He writes in the Attic dialect a book on the nature of the universe, which he deemed eternal. On his theories the systems of Aristotle and Plato were chiefly based.

Epictetus, a Stoic philosopher of Hieropolis, in Phrygia. Like the Stoics, he maintained the immortality of the soul; unlike them, he condemned the practice of suicide, which they followed.

In 1811 the *Curse of Kehama*, a Hindoo epic, in which the irregular blank verse of *Thalaba* was superseded by irregular rhymed verse, created something of a sensation; and Scott declared he had never read anything more impressive than the approach to Paladan, the oriental Hell. Southey had realised that in two points he might attract his readers. Poetry for many years, had been wanting in the interest of story; and Eastern legends, for the ordinary reader, were something entirely new. A quaint touch illuminated its verses; yet in many instances betrayed that their writer had not the true instinct of a poet. Lines like the second and the ninth in the following extract show this only too clearly:

"A stream descends on Meru mountain;
None hath seen its secret fountain;
It had its birth, so Sages say,
Upon the memorable day
When Parvati presumed to lay,
In wanton play,
Her hands, too venturous Goddess, in her mirth,
On Siva's eyes, the light and life of Earth.
Thereat the heart of th' Universe stood still;
The Elements ceased their influences; the Hours
Stopt on the Eternal Round; Motion and Breath
Time, Change, and Life and Death,
In sudden trance opprest, forgot their powers.
A moment, and the dread eclipse was ended;
But at the thought of nature thus suspended,
The sweat on Siva's forehead stood,
And Ganges thence upon the world descended,
The Holy River, the Redeeming Flood."

Meru. According to orthodox Hindus, the globe is divided into two hemispheres, both called Meru; but the upper one is distinguished as Sumeru, which means beauty and excellence; and the lower one as Sormeru, which means the reverse. The water from heaven was supposed to come down like a stream upon Meru, and thence to break, in four streams, from Meru's great height; one of these streams being the Holy River of the Ganges.

Parbati, also called **Kali**, the wife of Shiva or Siva, represented as a tigress, but often in human form. She eventually became the famous Goddess with twelve arms.

Shiva, or Siva. The members of the Hindu Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, were looked upon as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer; though Shiva often acted as a benevolent god. He is represented as the Brahmin Bull; and when Kali was with him, the terrible part of their work was done, and they were worshipped.

Southey's other poems were chiefly concerned with Spanish matters; and *Don Roderick*, issued in 1812, was the last of his romantic epics. He made it a good tale, rather than a good

poem; but by leaving it free from the full details which rendered other epics so wearisome, he secured a greater success and much commendation. Southey's appointment as Laureate brought about the necessity of writing verses on the death of George III., which Byron took the opportunity of burlesquing in his *Vision of Judgment*. Byron's poem was so infinitely the better of the two, that its reputation tended to bring about a neglect of Southey.

Southey's real claim to a high place in literature rests upon his work in prose. He was master of the most pure and perfect English style of a simple yet scholarly kind. "Prose, clear, buoyant, vigorous, was in fact his true speech." His *Life of Nelson* is the most remarkable short biography in the language, and that of Kirke White is hardly its inferior. A miscellany in seven volumes, called *The Doctor*, shows Southey as a model for all to follow in the writing of prose. He died in 1843; when his brain had been affected for some considerable time.

(4) Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832).

Romantic poetry, in its appeals to the many, was helped on far more by Scott, than by Wordsworth, Southey, or Coleridge; for there was an openness and kindness about Scott's work, which was more or less wanting in the others. Scott's first great poem was the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, published in 1805. *Marmion*, the *Lady of the Lake*, and the *Lord of the Isles*, followed in the next ten years. By 1814, *Waverley* had been written; and, as Byron had passed Scott in poetry, Scott saw his own future was that of a novelist. The *Waverleys* proved it; for there was in them a power of imagination, surpassed only by Homer and Shakspere. Scott was the first writer of the Romantic school to turn the thoughts of the English people towards the Middle Ages. Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge were read by few; Scott by all.

Scott himself was a combination of energy, high spirit, and strength; to which were added a tenderness of feeling and a lively imagination. He was a man of gentle blood, related through a line of Border chiefs to the great family of Buccleuch; the records of his ancestors' feats gave him almost a personal association with feudal times. A strong Tory in politics, he recognised the good of Whigs, Covenanters, and Puritans. There was not in his work any of the philosophy attempted by Wordsworth, or any of the melancholy to be found in Shelley and Byron.

Scott received his education at the Edinburgh High School and the University. The district where his childhood was spent

was full of interest, and his college vacations were given to rambles through the Border dales, especially Teviotdale, where, with love and respect, he lived with the dalesmen, and listened to their tales and ballads. In 1792 he became an advocate, yet never lost his love for literature; and in 1802 his vacation walks culminated in a collection of *Border Minstrelsy*, to which he added some ballads of his own.

Lady Dalkeith, wife of the eldest son of the Duke of Buccleuch, then asked him to write her some verses upon an old story; and this task, which he cheerfully undertook, developed itself into the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The Last Minstrel, in this particular case, was Scott himself; and the *Lay* is consequently the freshest and most natural of all his poems. Three years later he published *Marmion*, the greatest of his poems, concerning which he remarked, "My rogue always, in spite of me, turns out my hero." There is in *Marmion* an abundance of invention; and the lines, although wanting in finish, have a perfect ring of purity and strength. The description of Edinburgh and the King's Camp, as Marmion saw it on a fresh summer's morning, is a typical example of his bright work:

"Still on the spot Lord Marmion stayed,
For fairer scene he ne'er surveyed.
When sated with the martial show
That peopled all the plain below,
The wandering eye could o'er it go,
And mark the distant city glow
With gloomy splendour red;
For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning beams were shed,
And tinged them with a lustre proud,
Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
Where the huge Castle holds its state,
And all the steep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town!
But northward far, with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
And, as each heathy top they kissed,
It gleamed a purple amethyst."

In the *Lay* and *Marmion*, Scott varied his verse wherever his ear told him it would be effective. *The Lady of the Lake*, appearing in 1810, opened up the scenery and poetry of the Highlands, with lines of eight syllables throughout.

A hunter, following a stag, kills his horse with hard riding, and has to make his way on foot through an unknown country.

On coming near the lake, he sounds his horn, in the hope of calling to his side some of the members of his train,

"When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touched this silver strand,
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood concealed amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain.
With head up-raised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent. . . .
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,—
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow;
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had trained her pace,—
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue,—
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The list'ner held his breath to hear."

Rokeby, written in 1813, and the *Lord of the Isles*, two years later, both show great exhaustion; but before the last was published, *Waverley* had appeared. Scott wrote no more poetry, with the exception of a few lyrics. He ended his career as a poet with the *Farewell to the Muse* in 1822.

It has been suggested that Scott, in his poetical work, was at first under the influence of German writers. Yet when one recalls that from his childhood he had been familiar with the old Scotch ballads, and that when he was thirteen Percy's *Reliques* were his delight, the foundation of his verse hardly seems to have come from Germany. His earliest pieces, *Glenfinlas* and the *Eve of St. John*, which appeared in Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*, and two other tragic ballads of the *Gray Brother* and *Cadzow Castle*, are *all quite* free from the cramped style of the eighteenth century.

The *Lay of the Last Minstrel* owed something to Coleridge, whose *Christabel*, then unpublished, had been shown to Scott. He was attracted by the charm and music of the metre, and used it for his *Lay*, employing it for warlike verses rather than for a fairy tale, like Coleridge. The greatest merit of the *Lay* lies in the fact that Scott knew how to tell a good story in verse; a thing virtually unknown in literature since the days of Dryden. His influence in this respect has been excellent. All songs and ballads of daring exploits, of battles, of perilous adventures, have taken his singularly expressive verse as their model. Scott's own work, however, possesses one quality that his imitators sometimes lack. His natural temperament was so refined, that his readers instinctively feel they can rely upon the certainty of his good taste.

(5) Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822).

Percy Bysshe Shelley, the eldest son of a country squire, was educated at Eton and Oxford, and expelled from the University at the age of nineteen for having written a tract on the *Necessity of Atheism*. In the same year he married, and separated from his wife three years afterwards. On her death, in 1816, he took as his second wife the daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft. In the following year Shelley was deprived of the custody of his children by the first marriage, and in 1818 left England for Italy, where he lived chiefly at Naples, Leghorn, and Pisa, until he was drowned in the Gulf of Spezia in 1822.

In the course of nine years he produced a large mass of poetry, *Queen Mab*, his first attempt, being privately printed in 1813. It begins with the following lines, modelled on the first stanza of Southey's *Thalaba*:

> "How wonderful is Death—
> Death and his brother Sleep!
> One, pale as yonder waning moon,
> With lips of lurid blue;
> The other, rosy as the morn
> When, throned on ocean's wave,
> It blushes o'er the world:
> Yet both so passing wonderful!"

Queen Mab, with all its poetic feeling, was crudely written; though Shelley was under the impression that by it, the whole tone of society would be improved.

Alastor, in 1816, Shelley's first and most pathetic portrait of

William Godwin, a Radical writer, was known for his *Political Justice* and a novel called *Caleb Williams*, in which his theories were advocated. His wife, Mary Wollstonecraft, wrote a *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, commendable for her strong opposition to Rousseau.

himself, proved Wordsworth's influence by an absence of the vagaries in *Queen Mab*. Reflecting his dreamy side, it described a youth of pure life and great imagination, seeking to obtain infinite knowledge, and yearning for a Being with an intelligence similar to his own. Shelley conceived the idea of such a Being, who would embody all that was beautiful and good. He described his hero as roaming anxiously over the world, and, disappointed in his quest, sinking into an untimely grave. The opening part of the poem, telling of the youth's self-culture, is more attractive than the conclusion.

"His wandering step,
Obedient to high thoughts, had visited
The awful ruins of the days of old;
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange,
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,
Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphinx,
Dark Ethiopia in her desert hills
Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,
Stupendous columns, and wild images
Of more than man, where marble dæmons watch
The zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,
He lingered, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth; through the long burning day
Gazed on those speechless shapes; nor, when the moon
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades,
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time."

The *Revolt of Islam*, an enlarged and corrected version of another called *Laon and Cythna*, was published in 1818. A love-story veiled the real intention, the rebellion of Shelley against civilised communities. The *Revolt of Islam* was written in Spenserian stanzas, a metre too difficult for Shelley to control. The *Cenci* and *Prometheus Unbound* appeared in 1820; the first, a drama founded upon a repulsive Italian story; the second, in many respects, Shelley's best work.

The scene opens with Prometheus bound to the rock, and representing Humanity as living under the evil personated by Jupiter. Asia, a goddess, betrothed to Prometheus, typifies the spirit of Love pervading Nature. The rule of Jupiter is suddenly overthrown by Demogorgon; Prometheus is freed from his chains, and weds Asia. The drama closes with a fourth act, the chorus of a redeemed world. The poem is full of imagination; and stamps Shelley as a great lyric poet.

Shelley, who had never freed himself from the taint of the French Revolution, probably meant Prometheus as an exposition of his wild fancies concerning Humanity and Government. *Prometheus in Chains* was supposed to be the human race kept in captivity by systems of law. Demogorgon, who destroyed Jupiter, was the chaos or general disorder resulting from revolution. The weakness of Shelley's theories is very visible, when Prometheus, on being set free, has nothing to propose, except that Asia and he shall live together in a cave.

> "Asia, thou light of life . . .
> Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave . . .
> A simple dwelling, which shall be our own;
> Where we will sit, and talk of time and change,
> As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged. . . .
> We will entangle buds and flowers and beams
> Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
> Strange combinations out of common things,
> Like human babes in their brief innocence."

With some of his other poems Shelley fulfilled the true functions of a poet. The verses addressed to Lady Emilia Viviani, an unfortunate lady imprisoned in a convent, are sweet and touching; *Adonais*, an elegy upon the death of Keats, is even more effective. The shorter verses are still better. The *Witch of Atlas*, the *Ozymandias* sonnet, the *Ode to the West Wind*, the *Hymn of Apollo*, and *The Isle* are all perfect of their kind. Shelley, who was only thirty at the time of his death, lived in a world that was entirely one of his own. He believed, as did Wordsworth, that Nature was alive; yet, while Wordsworth held that its active principle was Thought, Shelley imagined that it was only impregnated with Love. On this idea his enthusiasm for mankind was entirely based. His pictures of this imaginary world are exquisite, though his spiritual conceptions cannot be applied to material facts.

(6) Lord Byron (1788-1824).

George Gordon, Lord Byron, was born in London in 1788. His father, the member of a distinguished family, was a man of bad character, who made away with all his wife's money. The fact that she was a woman of uncontrollable temper did not mitigate this misfortune. The relations between husband and wife were always strained; and those between the mother and son were little better.

By the death of a cousin, Byron succeeded to the family title when he was ten years old. He was educated at Harrow; and from there, in 1805, went on to Trinity College, Cambridge. While he was still an undergraduate, he printed his first

book of verses, his *Hours of Idleness*. This was a boyish production, criticised by the *Edinburgh Review* with unnecessary vigour.

Byron had always been attracted by Pope, and determined to avenge himself on the critic with a poem in the famous heroic couplet. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, so far as ability went, was better than the *Hours of Idleness*; but Byron had lost his temper, and could not conceal the fact. He abused the reviewers for their opinions, and then carried the war into his enemies' country. His comments upon Scott ran as follows:

> "Behold! in various throngs the scribbling crew,
> For notice eager, pass in long review;
> Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace,
> And rhyme and blank maintain an equal race;
> Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on ode;
> And tales of terror jostle on the road. . . .
> Thus Lays of Minstrels—may they be the last!—
> On half-strung harps whine mournful to the blast,
> While mountain spirits prate to river sprites,
> That dames may listen to the sound at nights;
> And goblin brats, of Gilpin Horner's brood,
> Decoy young border-nobles through the wood,
> And skip at every step, Lord knows how high,
> And frighten foolish babes, the Lord knows why;
> While high-born ladies in their magic cell,
> Forbidding knights to read, who cannot spell,
> Despatch a courier to a wizard's grave,
> And fight with honest men to shield a knave.
>
> "Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
> The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
> Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
> Not quite a felon, but yet half a knight,
> The gibbet or the field prepared to grace;
> A mighty mixture of the great and base."

Southey next received a castigation:

> "With eagle pinion soaring to the skies,
> Behold the ballad-monger Southey rise.
> First in the ranks see Joan of Arc advance,
> The scourge of England, and the boast of France!
> Though burnt by wicked Bedford for a witch,
> Behold her statue placed in glory's niche;
> Her fetters burst, and just released from prison,
> A virgin phœnix from her ashes risen.
> Next see tremendous Thalaba come on,
> Arabia's monstrous, wild, and wondrous son;
> Domdaniel's dread destroyer, who o'erthrew
> More mad magicians than the world e'er knew. . . .
> Oh! Southey, Southey, cease thy varied song,
> A bard may chant too often and too long."

Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* were execrated:

"Next comes the dull disciple of thy school,
That mild apostate from poetic rule—
The simple Wordsworth, framer of a lay
As soft as evening in his favourite May,
Who, both by precept and example, shows
That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose;
Convincing all, by demonstration plain,
Poetic souls delight in prose insane.
Thus, when he tells the tale of Betty Foy,
The idiot mother of an 'an idiot boy,'
So close on each pathetic part he dwells,
And each adventure so sublimely tells,
That all who view the 'idiot in his glory'
Conceive the bard the hero of the story."

Coleridge was dismissed in a few lines:

"Shall gentle Coleridge pass unnoticed here,
To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear?
Though themes of innocence amuse him best,
Yet still obscurity's a welcome guest. . . .
Yet none in lofty numbers can surpass
The bard who soars to elegise an ass,
So well the subject suits his noble mind,
He brays, the Laureate of the long-ear'd kind."

Byron was only twenty-one when he wrote these verses; and, as he admits himself, he "was very young and very angry." In after years he regretted that his wrath had not been more restrained.

Byron went abroad for two years; when the delights of the Mediterranean roused his imagination, and developed his genius. On his return to England, he became famous, in 1812, by his poem of *Childe Harold*, the fruit of his voyage. Seven editions of the work were sold in five weeks. During the next three years, he produced *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*, *Lara*, and *The Siege of Corinth*. At the beginning of 1814 he married an heiress; with whom his life was singularly unhappy.

Byron, in 1815, left England never to return. He spent eight years in Italy—at Venice, Ravenna, Pisa, and Genoa; and in 1823, attracted by the Greek Insurrection, set out for Greece to join in the rebellion. The campaign gave him a malarial fever, and he died at Missolonghi in April, 1824. His body was brought home, and buried near Newstead Abbey.

The poems written during a residence in Italy were the best. The third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold*, *Manfred*, *Cain*, *Mazeppa*, and *Beppo* all represented work of the highest order; and the last two cantos of *Childe Harold* were much superior to the first. The emotional feeling of the last cantos, increased by

the troubles and sorrows of his life, found relief in passages of real eloquence. The associations of the Mediterranean taught him to understand the greatness of history; and the grander aspects of nature helped him to attain to actual sublimity.

Byron's fame for many years stood high in England, while on the Continent it was greater, and even more lasting. When his best work had been produced, the influence he exercised upon the French was very great. In Germany, Heine to a large extent, was his follower; in Russia, Spain and Italy he was regarded as a master by the younger poets of each nation, a feeling which hardly ever existed in his own country.

His work was fluent and done with ease, though want of finish injured many of his good points. Byron, clever at passages demanding passion and fire, had not Chaucer's power of polished expression, by the use of the simplest words in the right place. He could not convey new ideas to his readers' minds after the manner of Shakspere, or treat a lofty theme with the dignity of Milton. Wordsworth's philosophic lines have a certain amount of originality, while none of Byron's opinions were new. Satire was the verse in which he was best qualified; for from it he learnt to avoid a gorgeous and unreal style.

(7) John Keats (1795-1821).

John Keats, the son of a man who worked in a livery stable at Moorfields, was born in 1795, and lost both his parents while he was still a boy. John was sent to a good school at Enfield, kept by a Mr. Clarke; whose son Charles Cowden Clarke, afterwards well known as a Shaksperean scholar, was his great friend.

On leaving school in 1810, he was apprenticed to a surgeon at Edmonton; and, being thus still in the neighbourhood of the Clarkes, he saw much of them, and they took great interest in helping his evident capacities. They lent him books, the *Faerie Quene* amongst them, and Keats came under an influence which never left him for the whole of his life.

In 1817, he brought out his first volume of poems, which had little success; but his friends encouraged him, and in the next year he published *Endymion*. It was attacked in *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Quarterly Review*. The virulence of these notices, however, called more attention to it than favourable ones would have done, so Keats continued his writing for the next year or two producing his best poems.

A third volume, containing *Lamia*, *Isabella*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and other poems, came out in 1820; and his unfinished

Hyperion was issued by his publishers, against Keats' will, in the summer of the same year. He was broken down at this time by consumption, and the stay in Italy in September, 1820, did not succeed in saving him. He died in February, 1821, in his twenty-sixth year, and was buried in the Protestant cemetery at Rome.

Keats passed on the tendencies of the Romantic movement in a way not achieved by any of his contemporaries. The evidences of this may be seen in almost the earliest of his poems. In *Calidore*, a piece appearing in his first book, the tone of the Romantic is distinctly heard. His couplet poems, the *Epistles* and *Endymion*, were written in a peculiar verse, with a considerable use made of double rhyme. This did much to bring about the outcry which was raised against *Endymion*, and to lead to the assertion that his work was not genuine Greek, but merely a copy of Elizabethan fancies. It is a more reasonable criticism to say that the influence exercised on Keats was that of mediæval Greek, strongly marked with the Romantic feeling. Wherever the source of his inspiration, it remains as a fact that Keats led the way for subsequent English poets to a far greater extent than any of his six contemporaries. To Keats, we trace much of the work of Tennyson, Rossetti, Swinburne, and Morris. Even some of Browning is to be referred to his influence, and the minor poets of three generations have nearly all followed in his footsteps. Milton has laid it down that poetry should be "simple, sensuous, impassioned," a criticism frequently misunderstood by an ignorant belief that sensuous and sensual are equivalents. Sensuous poetry, however, merely signifies poetry which addresses the senses, by putting before us pictures or images of sense. Keats was both simple and sensuous, and his passion was the spiritual "yearning for the Beautiful," which is entirely an exercise of the intellect. To see things beautifully, is to see them truly; and Keats was a great poet because this fact made itself clearly and justly known to him. He died too young to reach the mature development of the poetic mind, the constructive power which makes possible the great tragedies of Æschylus or Shakspere.

It may be claimed for him that he is closely akin to the Elizabethan school, by reason of his having been first inspired by them, and appreciated their manner of looking upon nature and their genuine delight in beauty.

He was attracted not only by mediæval times. The Greek life and spirit, and the myths of Paganism were an equal source of pleasure. In one respect he was touched by the real Greek feeling for beauty, and so learnt how to delineate it in the truest manner. "Poetry," he declared, "should surprise by a

fine excess." That he was a Romanticist, is shown in his own art.

His Odes *On a Grecian Urn*, *To a Nightingale*, *To Autumn*, *To Psyche*, and the sonnet *On first looking into Chapman's Homer;* and his other poems, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *Isabella*, *The Eve of St. Mark*, and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* all illustrate this point. For finish of work and perfect expression, the Odes are unequalled in English poetry.

80. The Later Essayists.

We have now to deal with four celebrated writers of prose, one of whom had a considerable claim to be regarded as a poet. Two of them died before the Victorian Age began, the others both survived till 1859. The work of all being similar in kind, it is better to treat them as one group rather than to divide them by any fixed date.

(1) Charles Lamb (1775-1834).

Lamb has to be considered from several standpoints. Though his work does not amount to much in bulk—for when collected it can all be put into one small volume—it deals with a variety of topics, and is presented in several different forms. He was a writer of verse, a teller of graceful tales and stories, a dramatist, a letter-writer, a critic, and an essayist. Examining his work as an essayist first, we are at once brought face to face with the remarkable position that he attained. The essay during Elizabethan days was grave and serious. In the hands of Bacon it generally took the form of a short discourse upon the deeper subjects of life or morals. It dealt with Duty, with Friendship, with Adversity. It touched upon Studies, or the Vicissitudes of Things. The sentences were weighty and solemn. They were filled with the learning of the Renascence, tempered by the humanity brought about by a large knowledge of the world. It was a form of essay-writing essentially grave and decorous; a method of utterance employed by wise and thoughtful men.

In the following century, however, it became touched by the lighter spirit of the Restoration; and while in the drama and in verse the effect of this spirit led to degeneration, in the essay it led, not so much to change, as to the creation of a new style. This was due to an influence coming from France, which made it possible for an essay to be employed in a lighter manner and on lighter subjects than had been the case in the days of Elizabeth. Another century had yet to be passed, and the days of Anne to be reached, before it received the finishing touches of its newer form.

They were given to it by the well-known friends, Richard

Steele and Joseph Addison, who did for the essay two things that had never been done before—they made it periodical, and they made it popular. Their paper, the *Spectator*, came to an end in the year 1714; and though many other series followed in imitation—among which those of Dr. Johnson, the *Idler* and the *Rambler*, are the most famous—they none of them possessed the lightness of touch, or grace of treatment, which so distinguished the work of Addison and Steele. During the second half of the eighteenth century, the charm of the short essay steadily evaporated; until by 1780 it had entirely gone.

During the time that the essay was thus declining, all forms of literary expression were undergoing a change. Charles Lamb, publishing his essays during the first quarter of the present century, not only revived the essay both in form and spirit, as it had been in the days of Steele and Addison, but, returning to the methods of his great predecessors, caught the peculiar grace and airy movement of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*; a grace and movement after which Johnson and his imitators had tried in vain. Lamb gave also to his essays certain qualities which even Addison himself had not possessed; working, so far as matter went, on lines different from his masters, while in spirit and general tone he kept them almost identically the same. Lamb developed at last into a high priest of his craft, quite on a level with those he had followed; and it is this that, in addition to the intrinsic merit of his work, makes his position one of singular interest in the world of letters.

Lamb was a man whose mind was above all things attracted to the past; chiefly because the works of his contemporaries, and of those who had immediately preceded him, appealed little to his particular tastes. That they were not congenial to him, was chiefly owing to the circumstances of the time. The troubles with America and France, the rebellion of the colonies, and the Revolution turned men's thoughts away from the writing of merely graceful prose. The deeper questions of political theory were studied. The age of fancy had to slumber for a while.

When Lamb began his essays, there was, as yet, little between him and the heavier work of the previous century. The earlier volumes of the *Waverleys* had been issued; though Lamb turned away from the romance of Scott, and with the new poetry of Byron and Shelley he was not attracted. It seemed a small step to go back to the Elizabethan dramatists; and a smaller one still, to the essayists of Anne.

His essays, which first appeared under the *nom de plume* of "Elia," were printed in the pages of the *London Magazine*. They began in August, 1820, and came out at frequent intervals until the autumn of 1822. In the following year they were collected

and issued separately in a volume. Eleven years later, in 1833, there appeared another book, called the *Last Essays of Elia*, comprising some more papers which had been contributed to various periodicals. The first volume contains thirty papers, the second twenty-four.

As to the matter of these essays, Lamb writes upon any subject which takes his fancy. There is no carefully drawn-out scheme of philosophy, no continuous line of thought running through the whole. He writes upon his own school-days, on actors, on plays, on Quakers' meetings, on Oxford in the vacation, apparently on any subject that comes into his head. The titles of the essays, however, give little clue to their contents. Just as, when in a reverie, we let our thoughts wander, to find them, when we call ourselves back to the outside world, far from our original starting-point, so does an essay of Lamb ramble from one subject to another, the parts of it linked together by trains of thought, sometimes obvious, sometimes incongruous, often grotesque, always delightful. Thus it comes about that in these fifty-four essays there is an endless variety, and an endless store of surprises. Mixed up with reflection and shrewd comment, are dozens of humorous anecdotes and personal details. Small in themselves, fascinating from the way in which they are told, they add to the book a sense of actual acquaintance between author and reader.

It is no doubt due to this that those who do like Lamb like him with an almost personal affection. He passed an uneventful life, save in one well-known and awful instance. There was always in his family a taint of insanity. He himself, shortly after entering the India House, had been subjected to an attack which, for six months, put him under medical care. He was recovering from his illness, when the same brain disease broke out in his unhappy sister. With a sudden fit of frenzy, and in the presence of the whole family, Mary Lamb stabbed her mother to the heart.

This terrible deed acted upon Lamb in an extraordinary way. The suddenness and violence of the shock actually steadied his brain. After that day, he does not seem to have suffered in any way from the fatal taint; but from that day the path of his career was clear. It was to be one life-long devotion to his poor mad sister; so he never married; though for seven years, as he says in one of his sweetest essays, sometimes in hope, sometimes in despair, but persisting ever, he courted the fair Alice Winterton. Lamb had no need to write formal treatises on duty and friendship, for his whole life was an exposition of their claims. He teaches us more by a glimpse of real facts, as revealed *in his essays*, than can be learnt from the writings of professed

moralists. People without the gift of sympathy are apt to complain that the matter of the essays seems to them trivial and uninteresting; that there is no exalted dissertation upon life, no profound thought upon ethics. It is better to remember that Lamb was a man who wrote slightly about such things, but who spent his days in living up to them.

One or two of the essays, by constant quotation, or, what is worse, by constant inclusion in books of extracts, have become so hackneyed as to have their delicate bloom almost brushed away. For this reason no mention will be made here of the *Dissertation on Roast Pig*, or *Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist*, or on the essay entitled *Imperfect Sympathies*. It is curious, however, to note that these three all form part of the first volume of the series; and that the second volume, which contains some of Lamb's most exquisite work, has more or less escaped the hands of the pseudo-admirers. But in the second volume, we find such pieces as *Captain Jackson* and *Old China*; the first of which is a sympathetic account of the struggles of poverty; the second, taking a tea-service as its text, a discourse upon the philosophy of content. It proceeds, however, upon no recognised lines, but wanders on from reminiscence to reminiscence, while the lessons which it conveys are always the more effective because they are suggested rather than urged.

Lamb begins by declaring his delight in the figures and pictures upon blue china cups and plates. He gently ridicules their entire lack of perspective—the world before perspective, as he calls it—of the Chinese artists. He delights in the courtly Mandarin, who hands tea to a lady—two miles off—as he does in the Chinese beauty who is about to venture into a boat, and steps in such a way as will land her a furlong on the other side of the stream. He is charmed to see a cow and a rabbit lying down in the middle distance, and to notice that the rabbit is of the same size as the cow, or, as he puts it, is co-extensive.

These details, he says, he noticed when drinking afternoon tea with his cousin (and the cousin of the essays is, of course, the sister of his real life), and when using for the first time a set of old china which they had recently bought. From this he goes on to remark how favourable their circumstances had been of late years, that they should be able to please themselves with purchases such as these; a remark which causes a passing shade to cloud the face of his cousin, and leads her into an eloquent defence of the days of their poverty.

She almost wishes that those days were come again, when a purchase was more than a purchase, when it was a triumph; when it was necessary to debate if the money could be spared, and, if it were spared, how it could be made up. She reminds

him of a certain thread-bare brown suit which he wore four or five weeks longer than he should have done, because fifteen or sixteen shillings which had been put by towards a new coat were suddenly expended upon a folio of Beaumont and Fletcher. "Now," she says, "you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring home any nice old purchases now."

She reminds him of the time that he came with twenty apologies upon laying out a less number of shillings upon a print by Leonardo. "When you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money and looked again at the purchase—was there no pleasure in being again a poor man? Yet now you have nothing to do but walk into a printshop and buy a wilderness of Leonardos. But do you?"

Again, she reminds him, he is too proud to see a play anywhere but from the pit. Yet in their poor days they were glad enough to squeeze out their shillings to sit three or four times a season in the gallery. "You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then. But sight and all is gone, I think, with our poverty."

So she passes on from one subject to another, until he answers her with wise and gentle words, which, referring as they do to the special relation between brother and sister, seem to us now to be inexpressibly touching.

"It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened and knit our compact closer; we could never have been what we have been to each other if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of."

Then he adds one more little jest as to the figures on the tea-cup, whence the discussion has arisen; and so his essay comes to an end. It is a paper thoroughly typical of nearly every quality in Lamb—of his devious thought, of his gentle humour, of his kind humanity. Written in the best and sweetest English, it has few of his eccentricities of thought or expression.

Another essay, largely autobiographical, runs very much on the same lines as the *Old China*. This is the *Superannuated Man*, an account of his own dismissal, on a liberal pension, from the service of the East India Company, with whom he had been for thirty-three years, and of his sensations as a free man, compared with those which had been his lot when he was a daily slave. Above all things he was a prisoner. For holidays he had only "a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a *full week* in the summer to go and air myself in my native

fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence, and the prospect of its recurrence alone, I believe, kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when this week came round, where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting up the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have maintained my thraldom."

It was not the least noble thing about Lamb that his life-long confinement in a counting-house called from him no bitter words. There is a profound melancholy in the phrases of this essay; a melancholy which serves as a background to his kindly humour. In the paper called "Oxford in the Vacation," he speaks, too, of "such a one as myself, who has been defrauded in his young years of the sweet food of academic instruction." But there is no reviling against Fate; no beating against the bars of his cage. The same motive which made him lead a bachelor's life impelled him to continue in a distasteful employment, because upon it was dependent his income; and upon his income was dependent the well-being of some one other than himself.

In considering the method of the essays, we touch upon the more delicate aspect of Lamb's work. He was by instinct a humorist; and his papers contain the very essence of humour; from which it follows that those who lack a sense of humour themselves, can never be genuine admirers of Lamb. This, probably, was what De Quincey was thinking when he made his famous remark that the chief pleasure we derive from Lamb's writing is due to our secret satisfaction in feeling that his admirers must always be a select few. A sense of humour is almost too obvious to those who possess it. It is also absolutely incomprehensible to those who do not. They may understand the actual words of a sentence; they do not follow the linking together of incongruous ideas. Yet on such linking of dissimilar thoughts the humour of Lamb depends.

A difference exists between Addison and Lamb. Addison's intellect was so great that he stands above humanity, and watches their foibles with the calmness of a superior being. He is thus able to smile at their weakness with indulgence.

Lamb has little of this serenity. His is not so much the humour of looking on. It is rather the humour of being and doing, and thus, except to a person of humour, Lamb is either incomprehensible; or, if comprehensible, absurd. A literally-minded person cannot understand him. If we turn from Lamb's

essays, and from the fanciful writing of his letters, and glance at his papers which are professedly critical, we shall find in them evidences of a mind of the acutest perception. It was upon the works of the dramatists and matters connected with the stage that his acumen chiefly showed itself. His essay upon Hogarth is interesting, because it proves how he was affected by the subjects of the pictures rather than by the artist's technique. He studied Hogarth's series as so many stories or dramas of real life. He looked upon them from the point of view taken by Thackeray, and wisely taken, when Hogarth was included among the English humorists. To writing of this kind it may of course be objected that criticism on such a basis is not art criticism. But art lies in the expression of ideas, whatever the medium may be in which those ideas are expressed. A poet, a sculptor, a musician, is as much an artist as is a colourist or draughtsman; and Lamb, criticising Hogarth, is really an artist in words, commenting upon another artist, who taught his morality through colour and line. When Lamb comments upon the work of the dramatists, then his critical faculty is best.

That Lamb was a true artist is best proved by considering what art really is. Its aim and object is to please; and that is not true art which is undertaken for any other purpose. The artist is he who is so impressed with the beauty of things, that he must needs express that beauty by words, melodies, colour, or form, in order that others may share his joy. If his work be done with other motive, then his work is not true art. Its producer may be an earnest man, possibly even a benefactor of the race, but he will not be an artist. Lamb was gifted by nature with a sense of the keenest humour, and with a faculty for the quaintest and most original expression. These things gave to him an exquisite delight, and the desire to make his fellows share in this delight, was the mainspring of all his writing. He wrote his essays with no set attempt at teaching his fellows; yet the teaching is there. For those with a genuine power of enjoyment, if they would wander in a land of exquisite English, where there is never a thought that is mean or base, where the sentiment is as pure and sweet as the wording in which it is conveyed, then let them take down the *Essays of Elia* from the bookshelf, and give themselves up to the witchery of Charles Lamb.

(2) William Hazlitt (1778-1830).

The names of Addison, Steele, and Goldsmith are still familiar as household words, but the name of William Hazlitt, never very widely known, is now almost entirely forgotten. The *work done by* the first three men was imaginative work of the

highest kind, full of fancy and invention, and enriching the world with new creations. The work done by Hazlitt was analytical and critical, rather than creative; and dissected literature without adding to it. In spite of such limitations, the part played by Hazlitt in the world of letters was not a small one; and, although he is deserted by popular favour, the influence that he exercised is probably growing greater and greater every year. He is one of the factors that always play so large a part in English life, whose work is none the less convincing because it is unseen. Hazlitt, though not read by the crowd, has exercised a salutary influence upon all who, since his day, have achieved good work.

Hazlitt was born in 1778, the son of a Nonconformist minister, and in his early years came into contact with Coleridge, who was then preaching at the Unitarian Chapel in Taunton. Coleridge was attracted by the young man and invited him on a visit for the following spring. Hazlitt, delighted with the honour of this invitation, conscientiously prepared himself by retreating to Llangollen Vale, in order to make himself acquainted with the "mysteries of natural scenery." He had been greatly impressed by Coleridge's recently published *Ode to the Departing Year*, and steeping his mind in this, in *Paul and Virginia*, and in the *New Heloïse*, Hazlitt found that Llangollen Vale became to him the "cradle of a new existence." The visit to Coleridge proved a great success. The kindest of welcomes was extended to him, and he met Wordsworth, some of whose poems he was permitted to read in manuscript. Twenty-eight years afterwards he wrote, "I may date my insight into the mysteries of poetry from the commencement of my acquaintance with the authors of the *Lyrical Ballads*."

It had been intended that Hazlitt should enter the ministry, and for that purpose he went to the Unitarian College at Hackney, where he did not stay after 1795. He had developed a wish to follow art, and for some few months studied at the Louvre; and in 1803 came back to London, with all his thoughts turned in the direction of literature. In the pursuit of literature, too, the whole of his subsequent life was spent, yet it was not until after the lapse of twelve years that anything of value proceeded from his pen. His *Principles of Human Actions* (1805) and *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs* (1806) were both failures; and did not, indeed, deserve any better fate. It was not until the writing of the *Round Table Essays*, completed in 1817, and *The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, belonging to the same year, that Hazlitt found his real strength. He was, in fact, unqualified both by nature and position for work of the kind which he had first attempted.

He looked upon social and political matters from a theoretical standpoint; and had not sufficient knowledge of actual life to see where these theories were wrong.

In 1818 and the two following years, however, he redeemed himself by the production of some charming volumes of lectures he had delivered at various institutions. These books were respectively on the *English Poets*, on the *English Comic Writers*, and the *Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*. In 1821 appeared a most excellent collection of essays entitled *Table Talk*, and papers reprinted from the *London Magazine*; but just at the time when Hazlitt seemed to have redeemed himself, his extraordinarily perverse nature threw all his good work away, and brought about the crisis of his life, and the production, in 1823, of *The New Pygmalion*, his worst work. In the same year, he produced a really excellent book, his *View of the English Stage*. In 1825 came *The Spirit of the Age*; criticism personal and literary; and in 1826, *The Plain Speaker*, a collection of essays similar to those in *Table Talk*. Hazlitt was next absorbed in the production of *The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte*, two volumes of which appeared in 1828. They were entirely worthless, owing to the writer's want of balance on political questions, as well as to his incapacity for dealing with history. The book was completed in 1830, and in the autumn of the same year Hazlitt died.

The record of so sordid a life is uninteresting, even if not repellent, yet Hazlitt must be judged by taking his work apart from himself, and then by taking only a portion of that work instead of the whole. His historical and philosophical writings may be put on one side, and even his social essays may be disregarded.

It was, however, in one respect that Hazlitt was unrivalled, and that was in the difficult and exacting field of literary criticism. For this particular work he was gifted with all the qualities which it demands. His power of appreciation was strong and healthy, without being effervescent. His taste for phrase and form was well balanced and well directed. His common sense was strongly marked and rapidly applied. He was not led away in his criticism, as he was in other subjects, by a vague feeling for theory; but approached the points with which he dealt in an impartial and reasonable manner. The result is that in his critical writings Hazlitt has left us the best short commentary on the English poets, dramatists, and humorists. In addition to this, his criticism is so full, not in words, but in ideas, that it has served as the basis of all the sound literary criticism since his time. That Macaulay was *directly in his* debt it is impossible to doubt. Macaulay's style,

which Jeffrey so much admired, had been brought about by the influence of Hazlitt's contributions to the *Edinburgh Review*. From them Macaulay had learnt the first principles of that method of writing which he afterwards made more emphatically his own. Writers, too, as widely apart from one another as from Macaulay owed much to Hazlitt, both for idea and for method. The *Spirit of the Age* in many respects anticipates Carlyle; the essay on *A Landscape of Nicolas Poussin* is a forerunner of Ruskin.

Yet none of his work stands on the same footing as his literary criticism, for his genuine love for literature, and his natural gift of appreciation, supplied the fundamental knowledge which in other cases was so lacking. An examination of the leading characteristics of his criticism is therefore necessary. In the first place, his theories are excellent as to the question of what *is* good in prose or verse. In his papers he limited himself to the works of the greatest; and the chief feature of his criticism is the generous appreciation with which it is filled. "Milton did not write from casual impulse, but after a severe examination of his own strength, and with a resolution to leave nothing undone which it was in his power to do. He always labours, and almost always succeeds. He strives hard to say the finest things in the world, and he does say them. He adorns and dignifies his subject to the utmost; he surrounds it with every possible association of beauty or grandeur, whether moral, intellectual, or physical. He refines on his descriptions of beauty, loading sweets on sweets. . . . The power of his mind is stamped on every line. The fervour of his imagination melts down and renders malleable, as in a furnace, the most contradictory materials. . . . He describes objects of which he could only have read in books with the vividness of actual observation. His imagination has the force of nature. He makes words tell as pictures.

> 'Him followeth Rimmon, whose delightful seat
> Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
> Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.'

The word *lucid* here gives to the idea all the sparkling effect of the most perfect landscape."

Yet the appreciation is never overdone. Speaking of Spenser's poetry, for example, he says: "The language of Spenser is full and copious to overflowing. It is less pure and idiomatic than Chaucer's. . . . His versification is at once the most smooth and most sounding in the language. It is a labyrinth of sweet sounds that would cloy by their very sweetness, but that the ear is constantly relieved and enchanted by their continued variety of modulation." When a writer incurs the full force of his dis-

pleasure, Hazlitt can express that displeasure in no contemptible terms: "How different from Shenstone, who only wanted to be looked at, who withdrew from the world to be followed by the crowd, and courted popularity by affecting privacy! His letters show him to have lived in a continual fever of petty vanity, and to have been a finished literary coquet. . . . His poems are indifferent and tasteless."

The same power which enabled him to say clearly what he did not like, made it possible for him to say equally clearly what he did. So it comes about that Hazlitt is one of the most noted of men for felicitous expression; and for the compression into a few happy words of what would elsewhere be a page of paragraphs. The acuteness of his mind kept him also from the error into which even men so great as Lamb and Coleridge were apt to fall; from the error, that is to say, of permitting a gush of admiration. His remark upon Sir Thomas Browne, that he "turns the world round for his amusement, as if it were a globe of pasteboard," gives us the pith of what it has taken other writers many pages to demonstrate. Few things could be better of its kind than Hazlitt's general view of the subject which is prefixed to his *Elizabethan Literature*, and his criticism throughout the volume is pungent and convincing. It is when in his *Lectures on the English Poets* that he deals with the poetry of the Restoration and of the days immediately following that his faculty deserts him. His dislike for anything connected with the period probably brought an influence to bear upon him, which perverted, rather than stifled, what he felt upon the subject. On the other hand, when he was dealing with the comic dramatists of the Restoration his work was infinitely more satisfactory. It has been pointed out by an excellent critic that of the four best known descriptions of the men of that time, which have been written by Lamb, Leigh Hunt, Macaulay, and Hazlitt, that of Hazlitt stands pre-eminent above the rest. In like manner his remarks on Pope, on Smollett, on Burns, and on Coleridge are deserving of the highest praise. His papers are lightened by the variety of thoughts that he pours forth, illuminated by good wording and by apt quotations. Finally, among the highest of the values that they possess is what has been called their "germinal" character, whereby they not only suggest a multiplicity of thoughts to their readers, but skilfully induce those readers to think for themselves.

(3) Leigh Hunt (1784-1859).

Leigh Hunt's essays and sketches may not seem at first sight to possess much meaning. They are graceful and attractive enough to please the most casual; their significance is a sealed

book to those who are not fairly well read in literature. Hunt was essentially a man of letters, rather than a man of affairs; a condition of things which grew more and more marked in him as his life went on. His father, originally a clergyman, but afterwards drifting into Unitarianism, and eventually into Universalism, was himself far removed from being, in any sense, a man of the world. A strain of negro blood in him probably accounts for many of his characteristics. His power of eloquent and emotional speaking, his shiftlessness, and his light-heartedness were all to a great extent produced by the mixture of race. His wife, on the other hand, possessed a certain touch of Puritanism, and gave to her child a sense of melancholy and a strong feeling of conscientiousness. From this strangely assorted couple Leigh Hunt sprang. Hence his writings, at their cheerfullest, have a melancholy strain underlying them; and much as he sees and appreciates the beauties of life, his sense of inevitable fate is always perceptible.

Leigh Hunt was born in 1784 at Southgate, a village not far from the north of London, in the middle of a pleasant and countrified district. For the first few years of his life he seems to have been a delicate child, but was then considered strong enough to go to Christ's Hospital, the famous Blue-Coat School, where he remained until he was fifteen. He suffered at first, among his schoolfellows, in the way that a shy boy does, after the over-fastidious training of his home; on the whole, his school life turned out to be distinctly happy. The actual work gave him an intense dislike for Greek and Latin, but he developed, on his own account, a profound love for the English poets, and wrote, to the best of his ability, in imitation of them. Towards the end of 1799 he left the school, and spent the next few years in a desultory fashion, nominally reading law at his brother's office; really doing little more than amusing himself. It was probably due to these few years that Leigh Hunt's subsequent life assumed its after course. He had no opportunity for coming into contact with the bitter things of life; and he entered the world at twenty, believing himself to be fully experienced. His father, in 1802, had done a singularly foolish thing, by causing the boy's verses—a collection of poems written between the ages of twelve and sixteen—to be published under the title of *Juvenilia*. The book was undoubtedly clever, and obtained a success; but its issue went far to help the weakening of Leigh Hunt's character. In the year 1804 he began to work at journalism, and eight years later was imprisoned for a libellous article upon the Prince Regent. He used his time of imprisonment to write his poem *The Story of Rimini*, which was eventually published in the spring of 1816.

During the next five years he made a considerable number of literary friends; Shelley, Hazlitt, Cowden Clarke, and Bentham were among the number. Moore, Byron, Charles Lamb and his sister had all come to visit him in his prison days. Keats and Coleridge were added to the list by the year 1820; and two years later Hunt went over to Italy, at Shelley's earnest invitation, to join Shelley and Byron in a literary undertaking. The miserable accident of Shelley's death, however, put the scheme into entire confusion, and a quarrel occurred between Byron and Hunt, who had never been on intimate terms. Hunt stayed in Italy until 1825, being probably unable to get away before; and during his detention wrote a book entitled *Christianism*, which was expanded into the *Religion of the Heart*, and published twenty years afterwards.

In 1825, when Hunt was forty-one years old, he gladly returned to England, and settling down at Highgate, entered upon what was probably the happiest period of his life. Highgate was then entirely in the country, yet not far enough from London to make town life inaccessible, and in the fields and woods of Highgate he passed his days, reading and musing, and writing weekly essays. In 1833 his *Poetical Works* appeared, and in the same year he moved to Chelsea, where he made the acquaintance of Carlyle. 1840 was a particularly fertile year, comprising as it did the charming work of *Stories from the Italian Poets*, *A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla*, the concluding portion of the *Town*, and a great part of his *Autobiography*. His youngest son, Vincent, died in 1852, and the grief occasioned by this loss brought about the writing of the *Religion of the Heart*, from the earlier work of more than twenty years before. In 1857 his wife also died, and he himself expired in August, 1859.

The range of Leigh Hunt's work was surprisingly large, and it is not to be wondered that much of it has sunk into oblivion. To be poet, essayist, critic, and political writer makes a demand that no one man can satisfactorily face; and Hunt's fame centres most distinctly upon his poems and essays. In this domain of imaginative and artistic literature, Hunt occupied a high place; not so much for what he could produce himself, as for the appreciation he felt for the work of the great masters.

Hunt, in his essays, shows himself to be essentially a home-staying, treasure-loving mortal. "Sitting last winter," he says, "among my books, and walled round with all the comfort and protection which they and my fireside could afford me; to wit, a table of high-piled books at my back, my writing desk at one me, some shelves at the other, and the feeling of the re at my feet; I began to consider how I loved the

authors of those books—how I loved them, too, not only for the imaginative pleasures they afforded me, but for their making me love the very books themselves, and delight to be in contact with them. I looked sideways at my Spenser, my Theocritus, and my Arabian Nights; then above them at my Italian poets; then behind me at my Dryden and Pope, my romances, and my Boccaccio; then at my left side at my Chaucer, who lay on a writing-desk; and thought how natural it was for Charles Lamb to give a kiss to an old folio, as I once saw him do to Chapman's *Homer*. . . . When I speak of being in contact with my books, I mean it literally. I like to lean my head against them. . . . I love an author the more for having been himself a lover of books."

Such words, only to be written by one who loved books, can in like manner only appeal to those who love them too. Otherwise, the whole point of Hunt's meaning will be invisible, and the phrases themselves mere emptiness and sound.

Leigh Hunt's delicacy and wit are shown by the manner in which he can examine an old map, and read legends in its names and find recollections in its mountains and rivers. "It is now before us, the river Euphrates running up through it in dark fulness, and appearing through the paper on which we are writing like rich veins. Occasionally we take up the paper to see it better; the Garden of Eden, however, always remaining visible below, and the mountains of Armenia at top. The map is a small folio size, darkly printed, with thick letters; a good stout sprinkle of mountains; a great tower to mark the site of Babylon; trees, as formal as a park in those days, to shadow forth the terrestrial paradise, with Adam and Eve, as before mentioned; Greek and Hebrew names here and there mingled with the Latin; a lion, towards the north-west, sitting in Armenia, and bigger than a mountain; some other beast, stepping west from the Caspian Sea; and a great tablet in the south-west corner, presenting the title of the map, the site of Eden, or the terrestrial paradise, surmounted with a tree, and formidable with the Serpent; who, suddenly appearing from one side of it with the apple in his mouth, is startling a traveller on the other." The influence of Lamb has here strongly touched Leigh Hunt. In the above paragraph there is hardly an epithet that might not have been selected by Lamb; hardly a quaint thought unworthy of the *Essays of Elia*.

To turn to another side of Leigh Hunt's character, yet a side intimately connected with the delicate feeling that literary appreciation gives, it is to be noticed that he has always a spirit of reverence and respect when he is dealing with the questions of old age or the love of children. It is then that his best and

sweetest side shows itself, and displays the quality which is the real basis of his nature. In a singularly touching paper, called the *Deaths of Little Children*, the following passage occurs: "The liability to the loss of children—or rather what renders us sensible of it, the occasional loss itself—seems to be one of those necessary bitters thrown into the cup of humanity. . . . If no deaths of children at all ever took place, we should regard every little child as a man or woman secured; and it will be easily conceived what a world of endearing cares and hopes this security would endanger. The very idea of infancy would lose its continuity with us. Girls and boys would be future men and women, not present children. They would have attained their full growth in our imaginations, and might as well have been men and women at once. On the other hand, those who have lost an infant are never, as it were, without an infant child. They are the only persons who, in one sense, retain it always, and they furnish their neighbours with the same idea. The other children grow up to manhood and womanhood, and suffer all the changes of mortality. This one alone is rendered an immortal child. Death has arrested it with his kindly harshness, and blessed it with an eternal image of youth and innocence." The only equal to this is the beautiful little piece from the sketch of the *Old Gentleman*, when he writes: "He grows young again in his little grandchildren, especially the one which he thinks most like himself, which is the handsomest. Yet he likes best, perhaps, the one most resembling his wife; and will sit with him on his lap, holding his hand in silence, for a quarter-of-an-hour together." Here, in so touching an expression of emotion, all the more refined for its reserve, Leigh Hunt is seen at his very best.

Another of his charms lay in the love and admiration that he had for the great poets. Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspere, and of the English poets, Milton, were to him as dear and personal friends. The famous Italians stood towards him in the same relation. Of Chaucer he has this excellent piece of criticism: "His poetry rises in the land like a clear morning, in which you see everything with a rare and crystal distinctness, from the mountain to the minutest flower—towns, solitudes, human beings—open doors, showing you the interiors of cottages and of palaces—fancies in the clouds, fairy-rings in the grass; and in the midst of all sits the wild poet, alone, his eyes on the ground, yet with his heart full of everything round him, beating, perhaps, with the bosoms of a whole city, whose multitudes are sharing his thoughts with the daisy." The touch of genius which so draws out the great feature of Chaucer's work is one *that only* lovers of Chaucer will comprehend. But no paper

shows more completely his genuine appreciation and love for Shakspere than his little essay on the poet's birthday. "The fifth of May," he says, "making the due allowance of twelve days from the twenty-third of April, according to the change of style, is the birthday of Shakspere. Pleasant thoughts must be associated with him in everything. If he is not to be born in April, he must be born in May. Nature will have him with her on her blithest holidays, like her favourite lover. O thou divine human creature—greater name than even divine poet or divine philosopher—and yet thou wast all three—a very spring and vernal abundance of all fair and noble things is to be found in thy productions! They are truly a second nature. We walk in them, with whatsoever society we please; either with men or fair women, or circling spirits, or with none but the whispering airs and leaves. Thou makest worlds of green trees and gentle natures for us in thy forests of Arden and thy courtly retirements of Navarre. Thou bringest us among the holiday lasses on the green sward; layest us to sleep among fairies in the bowers of midsummer; wakest us with the song of the lark and the silver-sweet voices of lovers; bringest more music to our ears, both from earth and from the planets; anon settest us upon enchanted islands, where it welcomes us again from the touching of invisible instruments, and after all, restorest us to our still desired haven, the arms of humanity. Whether grieving us, or making us glad, thou makest us kinder and happier. The tears which thou fetchest down are like the rains of April, softening the times that come after them. Thy smiles are those of the month of love, the more blessed and universal for the tears."

It is impossible to imagine a piece of critical writing which could more exactly fit its theme; and this it does by natural instinct rather than by ingenious attempt. To those who can bring themselves into touch with the spirit of Shakspere, it is beautiful and fascinating.

Great as Leigh Hunt's affection for Shakspere was, his liking and his wholesome taste for other poets was equally remarkable. In a very charming paper, called *Breakfast in Summer*, he gives a description of his flowers and his breakfast table, and of the pretty and quaint things that he likes to have around him. Prominent among these are naturally books, which to him are "caskets, from which you may draw out, at will, bowers to sit under, and affectionate beauties to sit by, and have trees, flowers, and an exquisite friend, all at one spell. We see one now before us, standing among the cups, edgeways, plain-looking, perhaps poor and battered, perhaps bought of some dull huckster in a lane for a few pence. On its back we read, in old worn-out

letters of enchantment, the word Milton, and upon opening it, lo! we are breakfasting forthwith

> 'Betwixt two aged oaks
> On herbs and other country messes,
> Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses,'

at a place which they call Allegro. Or a word on the back of the casket is Pope, and instantly a beauty in *négligé* makes breakfast for us, and we have twenty sylphs instead of butterflies tickling the air round about us, and comparing colours with the flowers; or Thomson is the magic name; and a friend still sweeter sits beside us, with her eyes on ours, and tells us with a pressure of the hand, and soft, low words, that our cup awaits us. Or we cry aloud Theocritus! plunging into the sweetest depths of the country, and lo! we breakfast down in a thick valley of leaves and brooks, and the brown summer time, upon cream and honeycombs, the guest of bearded Pan and the nymphs; while at a distance, on his mountain top, Polyphemus, tamed and made mild with the terrible sweet face of love, which has frightened him with a sense of new thoughts, and of changes which cannot be, sits overshadowing half the vineyards below him; and with his brow in tears, blows his harsh reeds over the sea." The same qualities may be found in both extracts—the entire absorption of the original by Leigh Hunt, and the just conclusion that he draws with regard to it; the assimilation by him of all that is good in it; and the recognition of every one of its essential features.

This is the reason why his writing is unattractive, except to lovers of literature. To them he has always been a joy and a satisfaction—not so much on account of anything original that he can give us, as for his graceful, and in all cases cultivated admiration of the work of great men. Hence it is that we have so many charming and suggestive thoughts scattered up and down his pages. It was given to him to see in the lines of a great poem almost as many beautiful things as crowded the brain of the poet himself. It was further his happy destiny to be able to put into sweet and simple words such references to those same things, or such descriptions of them, as would come like a revelation to many who could not realise them by themselves. Leigh Hunt has no claim to immortality as a genius. He occupies a far more lowly place; yet he was endowed with the gift of appreciation, and cultivated it with refined taste. His power of sympathetic insight was so great, and his judgment of what was really good so ready and true, that though he stands high both in his prose and verse, he is higher still in the infinite grace of recognising the imperishable work of others. *Then, in all self*-abnegation, he calls the careless world to its

delights, perfectly content if the name of Leigh Hunt be forgotten and obscure, so long as those of Chaucer and Shakspere and Milton be remembered.

(4) Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859).

De Quincey was the fifth son of a manufacturer, who had made a considerable amount of money in the Manchester trade. The family lived in what was virtually a country house at Greenheys, a village then a mile or more distant from the great town. The growth of a hundred years has long since destroyed the natural beauty of the place. De Quincey's father died a comparatively young man, but left his widow a competence, which she devoted during the rest of her life to the support and assistance of her children. The affection between De Quincey and his mother seems to have been genuine and strong, yet in many ways the influence she exercised upon him was futile. Mrs. De Quincey was a woman of decided taste, and of a certain amount of accomplishment; and her son's capacity for working out a sudden inspiration, and his incapacity for keeping up sustained efforts, were merely developments of her peculiarities. The austerity which so marked her was not reproduced in her son at all, for he appears to have been a singularly sensitive and observant child. The morbid condition into which he worked himself is drawn with only too much reality in his *Autobiographic Sketches*.

A far more wholesome existence than that which he led at home was given him at the Grammar School at Bath, where he was sent when he was eleven years old. Some success that he gained for his writing of Latin verses won him great commendation. His mother, terrified lest the applause he received should injure him, removed him to a private school in Wiltshire, the "chief recommendation of which was the religious character of the master." After a year of this experience, he met with another of a kind totally different from anything he had known before. Making a trip to Ireland in the summer, he spent three months at the house of Lord Carbury, where Lady Carbury, one of the most beautiful and accomplished of women, took a fancy to the strange, dreamy boy, and did very much to rouse him from the state into which he had fallen. He was then only fifteen years old; and his guardians wished him to go to a really good school, but De Quincey had come to look upon the companionship of boys as intolerable. He was sent to the Manchester Grammar School, where he stayed for two years, until his nerves could endure the life no longer. He ran away to Chester, where his mother then lived, and remained with her until his guardians should decide what should be done. From

his mother he presently obtained some money, in order to take a walking tour in Wales; but wearying of this tour soon, he made his way up to London. Here he went through a series of adventures which not only taught him some of the harsh realities of life, but reduced him to a state of destitution. The pages of his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* contain an account of these troubles and experiences.

In 1803, on the urgent advice of his guardian, he consented to go to Oxford, where he entered at Worcester College, and kept his name on the books for five years. He never got into touch with the most valuable side of English University life, for, instead of mixing freely with those of his own age, he lived like a hermit; and rather than avail himself of the advantages of the University, he would not conform in the least to her studies. He has left on record that with his tutor he had only one conversation; while nothing could express more clearly his misapprehension of the whole tone and spirit of the place than his apostrophe on leaving, "Oxford, ancient mother, hoary with ancestral honours, time-honoured. . . . I owe thee nothing."

He made the acquaintance of Coleridge and Wordsworth in 1807, and in the following winter, when he had left Oxford, he rented at Grasmere the cottage previously occupied by Wordsworth, which cottage he retained for twenty-seven years. The habit now grew upon him of becoming an opium eater, and before four years had elapsed he was confirmed in the daily use of the drug. In 1813 he enlarged the doses, in order to give himself, as he imagined, an extra relief. These increased quantities being once begun, could not possibly be left off, and in 1816 he was taking as much as 8000 drops of laudanum a day. In the midst of this worthless life he fell in love. The object of his fancy was Margaret Simpson, daughter of one of the small farmers in the dales, the men who held their own land, and who were known as Statesmen. She appears to have been an admirable as well as a beautiful young woman; but after marrying her at the end of 1816, and keeping himself away from his temptation until the middle of 1817, he allowed himself to relapse, and passed the next four years in a miserable and degraded condition. By 1821 the expenses of his household were so much increased that it was imperative for him to make some kind of effort. He contrived to deny himself a small portion of his excess, and found he was capable of giving his time to literary work. Of the world he could write nothing, for he had deliberately cut himself off from it. All that he knew were the visions of his fevered dreams, and these he incorporated in his *Confessions*.

For the next four years a considerable portion of his time was

spent in London, where he wrote daily for the journals, and was a frequent contributor to the *London Magazine*. Among his comrades on the staff of this magazine were Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, Cunningham, and Hood, a brotherhood loved and highly esteemed by De Quincey. The work he did was not sufficient to relieve his embarrassments, and his friendship with Professor Wilson, in Edinburgh, which he had made some years before, drew him there shortly in preference to London. The expenses of a double establishment—one for himself in lodgings, and another at Grasmere for his wife and children—led, in 1830, to the sensible conclusion of moving entirely to Edinburgh, where for the next few years he wandered restlessly from one house to another.

In three years came great changes, caused by the death of the youngest son, of the eldest son, and finally of Mrs. De Quincey herself. For one and twenty years she had been the helpmeet and preserver of the strange man whom she had wedded. One of the most intimate of their friends told the De Quincey girls that he had never seen a more gracious or more beautiful lady than their mother, and an old servant would often declare that none of the children would ever be so brave a woman. De Quincey, the most helpless of men, found himself left a widower with six children, of whom the eldest was a girl still in her teens. For some considerable time his movements are absolutely unknown; until 1838 he lived in lodgings in Lothian Street, and in 1840 the two eldest children took a cottage near Lasswade, about seven miles from Edinburgh, where they could live more economically, and where their father could easily come when he wanted quiet and rest. Lasswade, in fact, for several years of De Quincey's life, became his headquarters, except during those strange intervals, almost of hallucination, when he felt compelled to fly again to the busy town. In 1852 a more definite step was taken, by which he made a permanent settlement in Edinburgh, where he remained until his death in 1859.

De Quincey possessed a vast store of learning, and a remarkable capacity for words. He had not only a great many things to say, but he was provided with a powerful instrument for saying them. He wrote clearly, elegantly, and well upon the Greek philosophers, and he was unacquainted with the ordinary aspects of English life. He freely discussed the problems of political economy, yet could not keep his own accounts. He had a mind of an extraordinary comprehension, but was wanting in any balance of faculty. If he attempted a stately and dignified prose, his efforts usually ended in tedium; if, on the other hand, he sought to be lively and popular, the result, as a rule,

was in the worst possible taste. His humour, though copious, was poor in quality, yet he had the command of one particular kind of writing, and left enough of it to show that it was produced by no accident.

This writing was the prose-poetry which has made him famous, a writing that cannot be linked with any other prose.

The peculiar features which raise it so high are, firstly, its matter, with the strange and wild nature of the thoughts that it provokes; and its style, the mastery over words, the choiceness of phrase, the aptness of epithet. Let De Quincey write of one or other of the things that tempted him in the opium visions; let him deal with events of ordinary life, so long as they are coloured and transformed by the effects of his dreams, and the reader is transported into an unknown world. This can be seen in the following passage from the *Confessions*.

"I thought that it was a Sunday morning in May, that it was Easter Sunday, and as yet was very early in the morning. I was standing, as it seemed to me, at the door of my own cottage. Right before me lay the very scene which could really be commanded from that situation, but exalted, as was usual, and solemnised by the power of dreams. There were the same mountains and the same lovely valleys at their feet; but the mountains were raised to more than Alpine height, and there was interspace far larger between them of meadows and forest lawns; the hedges were rich with white roses, and no living creature was to be seen, excepting that in the green churchyard there were cattle tranquilly reposing upon the verdant graves, and particularly round about the grave of a child whom I had tenderly loved, just as I really beheld them a little before sunrise in the same summer, when that child died. I gazed upon the well-known scene, and I said aloud (as I thought) to myself, 'It yet wants much of sunrise and it is Easter Sunday, and that is the day on which they celebrate the first fruits of resurrection. I will walk abroad, old griefs shall be forgotten to-day, for the air is cool and still, and the hills are high and stretch away to Heaven; and the forest glades are as quiet as the churchyard, and with the dew I can wash the fever from my forehead, and then I shall be unhappy no longer.' And I turned, as if to open my garden gate, and immediately I saw upon the left a scene far different, but which the power of dreams had reconciled into harmony with the other. The scene was an Oriental one, and there also it was Easter Sunday and very early in the morning. And at a vast distance were visible, as a stain upon the horizon, the domes and cupolas of a great city—an image or faint abstraction caught perhaps in childhood *from some* picture of Jerusalem. And not a bowshot from me,

upon a stone, and shaded by Judean palms, there sat a woman; and I looked, and it was—Ann! She fixed her eyes upon me earnestly, and I said to her, at length, 'So then, I have found you at last.' I waited, but she answered me not a word. Her face was the same as when I saw it last, and yet again how different! Seventeen years ago, when the lamp-light fell upon her face, as for the last time I kissed her lips, her eyes were streaming with tears. The tears were now wiped away, she seemed more beautiful than she was at that time, but in all other points the same, and not older. Her looks were tranquil, but with unusual solemnity of expression; and now I gazed upon her with some awe, but suddenly her countenance grew dim, and turning to the mountains, I perceived vapours coming between us, in a moment all had vanished, thick darkness came on and I was far away from mountains, and by lamp-light in Oxford street, walking again with Ann, just as we walked seventeen years before when we were both children."

His autobiographical writings form the most important section of his papers; chief in interest and value among them being the *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*; *Levana, or our Ladies of Sorrow*; and the *Autobiographic Sketches*. The other papers often contain references to his own life, and deserve attention on that account. In the historical writings, he was too much concerned with the examination of some one point or theory to have a mastery of history from the wider point of view. It was only when undertaking the translation of Kant's *Idea of a Universal History* that the larger aspect of a case affected him at all. His philosophical, theological, and economic papers are more or less touched with the same flaw. He is far better in those on English literature, both as regards its history and its theory, and his criticism is all the more valuable because it was produced at an uncritical time.

It seems strange to say that De Quincey appears under domestic circumstances far better than under any other. The recently published *De Quincey Memorials* give us considerable information on this subject, and put him and the other members of the family before us in an unexpected light. Allowing for the fact that his vice had obtained a complete hold upon him at the time of his marriage, and that the first four years of his married life must have been one long agony for his wife, it is certain that after 1821 he managed to keep his cravings down, and from that time he seems to have developed into a devoted husband and a most affectionate father. The love for children, which he always showed, was one of the best traits of his character. He was personally charming, and liked by every one who came into contact with him.

Though much among what he left must be passed over, there remains a large amount which has made an indelible mark in English literature.

81. Writers of Fiction.

Miscellaneous Authors.

The success of the great novelists towards the end of the eighteenth century had led to an increase of fiction, in which tales of terror, little sentimental stories from the *Minerva Press*, and attempts at historical romances played the principal parts. One or two names are worthy of remembrance. William Beckford, in 1783, wrote an extraordinary tale, called *Vathek*; famous for its study of an Eastern queen, and for its description of the realm of Eblis. Beckford's work on this point is a kind of prose expression of Blake's drawings.

Anne Radcliffe made herself celebrated as a writer of wonderful romances. The most famous were the *Romance of the Forest*, in 1791, and the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, in 1795. Her tales, chiefly of a supernatural kind, were filled with accounts of ghastly events and experiences, which could nearly always be attributed to natural causes. There were many other writers of weird stories who never attempted any explanations of the horrors they related, and their witches and evil spirits to the end are triumphant.

Matthew Lewis wrote a gruesome story, *The Monk*, which was published in the same year as *Udolpho*, and followed it with a collection of ghostly stories, *Tales of Terror*, to which Walter Scott contributed. The third book written by Lewis was *The Castle Spectre*. All these tales were imitations of Mrs. Radcliffe.

A very different writer, with whose name this eighteenth century list must close, was Hannah More, a lady of reforming tendencies, and only remembered now by a didactic novel, *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife*. This for many years was a book of great popularity; and in parts, is decidedly clever.

Madame D'Arblay's *Wanderer*, in 1814, had been a disastrous failure, and her place to a great extent was taken by Maria Edgeworth, whose tales of Irish life, though poor as novels, gave a marvellously true picture of the lives of Irish squires. *Castle Rackrent*, in 1801, was her best work; *Belinda*, in 1803, depicted the dissipations of society at the end of the last century; *The Absentee* was an excellent piece of work; her last novel, *Helen*, appeared in 1834. Miss Edgeworth forms a sort of connecting link between Miss Burney, the last of the eighteenth century novelists, and Miss Austen, the first of the nineteenth.

She was gifted with great talents and a keen sense of humour, but she had not the power, except in the case of her Irish studies, of making her characters living creatures. She had great skill in the telling of a story, though it was difficult for her to invent the story perfectly.

Two of the Greatest Novelists—Jane Austen; Sir Walter Scott.

(1) Jane Austen (1775-1817).

Jane Austen occupies a position very different from that of Maria Edgeworth. While Miss Edgeworth was limited in her experiences to the unsettled lives of the Irish gentry, Miss Austen led a perfectly quiet life among the English county people, to whom her family belonged. Miss Austen's touch is more definite and more trustworthy than Miss Edgeworth's; her books have given her the proud position of being the best of our female novelists. Miss Austen wrote purely from the artistic point of view. She was quite satisfied with her own personal circle. She had no wish to make money, and cared nothing for popular fame. She was content to pass her life in work to which her most delicate care and attention was given; the result was her subtle reproduction of character, and her exquisite portraiture of those whom she actually knew.

Her father was rector of Steventon, near Basingstoke; he had been a fellow of St. John's College, Oxford. His wife was Cassandra Leigh, whose father, the Rev. Thomas Leigh, was a fellow of All Souls and niece of Dr. Theophilus Leigh, who for more than half-a-century was master of Balliol and the University wit of his day. The Austen family consisted of five sons and two daughters. The eldest son, James, was well read in literature, and seems to have done much to form his sister Jane's taste. The second brother had been adopted by a wealthy relation, and came in for a large property. The third brother, Henry, was a clergyman; the two youngest, Francis and Charles, were in the navy, and served in the Great War. They both became admirals, with a good record of gentle and kindly character, joined to a high spirit for their profession. A great affection existed between the brothers and the sisters, and the details of their duties, their prize-monies, and promotions went far to help the reality of Jane Austen's books.

Jane's dearest relation, however, was her elder sister Cassandra, a beautiful, staid, and thoughtful woman from her girlhood. They were always together; Jane had to be sent to school because they could not part. They lived at the same home and shared in the same bedroom until Jane's death in 1817. The two sisters appear in *Pride and Prejudice*—

Cassandra as the quiet Jane; Jane herself as Elizabeth. It has often been supposed that the other two sisters in *Sense and Sensibility* were meant as portraits, and Elinor may well be another study of Cassandra; but Jane is certainly not represented by Marianne.

Jane herself seems to have been most charming. A spiteful critic has declared that a girl with so sharp a pen must have been dreaded rather than loved. She has been described, however, by one who knew her, as a woman who never forfeited a tittle of her womanliness; as essentially good, true, and dear, as devoted to home, as cherished in the family circle, as the most obscure of her sisters. Jane was remarkable for her tolerant indulgence of other people. This resulted from her breadth of comprehension, and from the humour which characterised her genius.

In her reading, Jane Austen seems to have more or less kept herself to books of a high class. She greatly admired Cowper and Crabbe; and of her contemporaries, liked both Scott and Byron. Scott's poetry she particularly admired; and, from her knowledge of it, discovered at once who was the author of *Waverley*. Only three of Scott's novels appeared before her death, the other two being *Guy Mannering* and the *Antiquary*. Richardson's novels she knew as thoroughly as she knew Scott's. For him she had a great admiration, and Mrs. Radcliffe, Madame D'Arblay, and Miss Edgeworth all pleased her greatly. Of earlier writers she thought much of Johnson; the papers of the *Spectator* seemed to her only fit "to disgust a person of taste," one of the clearest proofs of the difference in tone existing at the beginning of the nineteenth century from that which had been general at the beginning of the eighteenth.

Jane Austen and her work are always regarded in one of two ways—those who can understand her books have for her the greatest appreciation; those who cannot understand them view them with dislike. Another celebrated novelist of a later date, Charlotte Brontë, fell into the error of regarding Jane Austen's work as "tame and domestic." Jane Austen, however, had studied carefully the people she had seen, and reproduced them in her books as types rather than actual characters. Charlotte Brontë, in birth and training the opposite of Jane Austen, had gone through a rough and coarse life when Jane had led a refined one. Charlotte Brontë had fewer opportunities of sketching from originals, and most of her characters were visions of her own brain.

Miss Austen was fortunate in two respects. She was gifted with a keen sense of humour, which she exercised in an effective manner. She had the natural refinements of a well-bred woman,

who lives in a cultivated society, and so kept herself from the error of writing about those of whose conditions of life she knew nothing. One of the greatest flaws of the later novelists has been that they have ventured to describe kinds of life with which they have no personal acquaintance. Jane Austen wrote only of the people whom she knew and had met; and, though she was quiet and observant, she never purposely drew people out. In general society she was silent and shy; but observed very closely that which she saw or heard; and it is thus that her work is real and truthful, and gives her rank as one of our greatest writers.

Jane Austen died, unmarried, in her forty-second year. Of her novels, *Pride and Prejudice* appears to have been the first, being written in 1796. *Sense and Sensibility* followed in the next year, and *Northanger Abbey* apparently in 1798. *Sense and Sensibility* was the first to be published, in 1811; *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813. For some years after 1798 Miss Austen did not write at all; in 1811 she began again, and left off only when she was dying in 1817. The books of this second period were *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Persuasion*.

Pride and Prejudice is regarded by many as the best of all her work; she spoke of it herself as a book which had "some sparkle." *Emma* has been called a "perfection of composition," and *Mansfield* admired for its thoughtfulness and earnestness of tone. Jane Austen's satirical power, so marked in the earlier books, was softened to a great extent as her nature mellowed.

(2) The Waverley Novels.

At the time of Miss Austen's death, Walter Scott had only just started in his career as a novelist. Three of his novels had appeared with wonderful rapidity, and Scott accomplished what the world had been trying to do for nearly two hundred years, and produced a really historical romance. Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the study of history had not extended further than the reading and writing of chronicles. In the case of men of genius, the anachronisms that ensued are not of great account. Shakspere's Romans are probably quite dissimilar to the actual Romans, but we delight in them as studies of character, and not because we look to them for a picture of their times. Scott, however, treated his subjects from a different point of view. When he dealt with historical material, he did his best to be accurate. He did not possess the scholarly knowledge of history that is demanded and made possible in these times; yet, as compared with any of his forerunners, he is superior to them all. *Waverley*, appearing in 1814, created the

historical novel in England, and gave its name to the whole of the series. The two which came next, *Guy Mannering* and *The Antiquary*, had, on the contrary, the slightest touch of history in them. *The Black Dwarf* and *Old Mortality* had more; and, though *The Heart of Midlothian*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *The Legend of Montrose*, *Rob Roy*, *Ivanhoe*, *The Monastery*, and *The Abbot* all appeared between 1816 and 1820, the two greatest of the historical books did not come until 1821 and 1823. These were *Kenilworth*, with its pictures of Elizabethan days, and *Quentin Durward*, with a marvellous study of Louis XI. of France. *The Fortunes of Nigel* and *The Pirate* belong to the year 1822; *Peveril of the Peak*, the same year as *Quentin Durward*. The next year saw *St. Ronan's Well* and *Redgauntlet*; and the remaining novels, *The Betrothed*, *The Talisman*, *Woodstock*, *The Fair Maid of Perth* and *Anne of Geierstein*, belong to the years 1825 and 1829. In 1831 *Count Robert of Paris* marked the breaking of his power, and in 1832 his life came to an end. This wonderful record of work during seventeen years has never been surpassed in bulk, and hardly in quality by any other novelist. In addition to it, during the same years he had written several of his poems, a number of shorter stories, *The Life of Napoleon*, and *The Tales of a Grandfather*.

The charm of his work lay in the fact that, with his novels, he went in an entirely new direction, avoiding both immorality and frivolity, one or the other of which had stained nearly all English fiction. He desired to put the novel into the position occupied in other countries by the drama; and by the power and purity of his work, he raised the great novel to its post as one of the strongest influences that touch the human mind. The tone and feeling of his books was pure and true. His uncle said once to him, "God bless thee, Walter, my man! Thou hast risen to be great, but thou wast always good."

Scott could describe humanity in its extremes; and belonging himself to a distinguished family, he could make real and perfect representations of well-bred people. In no work of fiction can be found a more truthful picture of a well-born, sympathetic, brave, and true woman than in *Rob Roy*, where Diana Vernon is drawn with loving hand, showing distinctly and delicately her sweet feminine nature; her real companionship to the man she loves, helping him in every way, and never trespassing upon him; her cultivated mind touching her life with the charm of refinement; always thoroughly womanly, and yet brave as a man in days of trouble or danger. The words of her husband, on the last page of *Rob Roy*, are the cry of a man with a broken heart. "You know, too, how long and happily I *lived with* Diana. You know how I lamented her; but you

do not, cannot know, how much she deserved her husband's sorrow."

While Scott has drawn such studies of those to whom he belonged, he has given equally good studies of the humble and the poor. No man dealt more sympathetically with the labourer, and those in want, than Scott in his actual life as well as in his tales. Sir Walter Scott will ever be reverenced, as not only one of the best of writers, but one of the best of men.

XXI. THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, EMPRESS OF INDIA.

82. English Literature from 1837.

(1) The Work of the New Era.

It is advisable, before dealing with Victorian literature, to consider some of the movements that influenced nearly the whole of Europe during the later years of the eighteenth and the earlier years of the nineteenth centuries.

The peoples of several empires and kingdoms in Central Europe had longed for changes in their conditions, and their hopes were more or less gratified by an unfortuitous rising in France, followed, as a matter of course, by a revolution.

England sensibly kept aloof from any intercourse with the Revolutionary party, until the Revolutionists' atrocities led to an attempt at democratic rule, which was checked by a military despotism. England then took a large share in quelling the tumult brought about by Bonaparte and afterwards by the Napoleonic Empire, her work in the suppression of these evils lasting until 1815.

The influences brought about in England were rather the trouble and expense of the war than anything coming directly from Rousseau or the Revolution. For some years England was in a condition of doubt and confusion, a state of affairs hardly mended by the discussion of social problems. The Reform Bill of 1832, when democracy was put into the position of a definite political factor, was an outcome of these complaints. There was not any revolutionary trouble with regard to the Bill, though by its results the nation was more perplexed than satisfied.

After five years of experiment, England saw she must prepare herself for a new epoch; and the accession to the throne of the young Princess Victoria aroused a chivalrous feeling and a sense of security unknown during the previous century. The subsequent changes were therefore gradual instead of revolutionary, and in every sense intellectual rather than material. Many of them proved more tentative than permanent, and the

era consequently developed into one of transition. Thought grew subjective and analytical; few definite decisions were arrived at; old questions pressed for an answer; and different authorities met them in different ways.

The present age, from a literary point of view, is most difficult to describe. Every other period of English literature possessed certain distinctive features, so that it is easy to distinguish between an Elizabethan sonnet, a Restoration lyric, or an eighteenth century satire; but during the nineteenth century, no general tone has run through our society, nor any one method modified our verse and prose. Our literature has suffered from a diversity of its forms. We accept several rival styles—one carrying finish and delicacy to a vanishing point, like Tennyson, another, like Browning, with little regard for harmony. These two extremes, conspicuous in both verse and prose, are followed by a third, the favourite of late years. This is the prose of philosophic and scientific research, with methods largely affecting the community, which act as a check upon the development of the imagination. In the face of such work no poet has dared such a flight as Shelley, eighty years ago, could make with *Prometheus Unbound*. The drama, with the exception of a few plays, and these poems rather than dramas, has not existed since *The School for Scandal*. Tragedies and comedies, instinct with poetry, perfect as literature, and perfect for representation, no writer of our days has been able to produce. The early days of the reign, always reverencing the example of Gray and Collins, of Wordsworth and Coleridge, gave us the best of Tennyson, the Brownings, Carlyle, Thackeray, Bulwer Lytton, the Brontës, Mrs. Gaskell, Anthony Trollope, Charles Kingsley, Disraeli, Matthew Arnold, Hallam, Milman, Macaulay, Froude, Kinglake, and Ruskin. These years were dominated by poetry and romance, and by the exercise of imaginative power. The later years contain the names of Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Sir Henry Maine, Leslie Stephen, Matthew Arnold, Professor Freeman, Rossetti and his sister, Morris, and Stevenson. Here philosophy, science, politics, and critical history have overwhelmed poetry and fiction. "When science flourishes, poetry dies."

Carlyle, for example, who did not believe in government being in the hands of the people, could not help his writings from being touched with democratic ideas. The romantic side of the poor man's hardships were shown in Mrs. Browning's *Cry of the Children*, and in Hood's *Song of the Shirt* and the *Bridge of Sighs*. The political aspect was treated for the people by one of themselves. *The Corn Law Rhymes*, by Ebenezer Elliott, were written in strong and well-expressed verse.

We have now to face the problem of totally altered social conditions. During the last quarter of a century reading has been extended to a vast number of people, which meant that new forms of production were called into existence to meet their requirements. From 1870 to 1880 there was a great decrease in the demand for standard works. Between 1880 and 1884 juvenile books increased, and fiction was at a low ebb. From 1885 to 1892 the condition of literature got even worse. Educational manuals multiplied, and the output of mediocre fiction increased. The influences of real literature among the new readers have been further diminished by the issue, since 1881, of weekly journals compiled of miscellaneous scraps, and destructive of the memory. Later years have seen the production of newspapers, remarkable for abnormal cheapness and a lack of value.

83. Poets before and during the early part of the Reign—Mrs. Hemans, 1793-1835; Mrs. Landor, 1802-1838; W. M. Praed, 1802-1839; Thomas Hood, 1799-1845; Sir Henry Taylor, 1800-1886; Philip Bailey, 1816-1856; R. H. Horne, 1803-1884; William Barnes, 1800-1886; Frederick Locker, 1821-1895.

Several of the writers named in this chapter were born before the accession of Her Majesty; and one, Mrs. Hemans, died in 1835. Yet they should be included in the Victorian Age, for they belonged in tone far more to the days of the Queen than to those of George IV. and of William, his brother. Winthrop Mackworth Praed, son of a serjeant-of-law, was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. He entered Parliament at an early age, remaining a member until his death. He was gifted with a light and pleasant wit, and produced a large quantity of verse on life and manners. At the time of his writing, the poetry of society had fallen very low; and its representation of English life was inaccurate, until Praed, coming to the rescue, taught his immediate successors.

Praed was a man of genuine humour, witty, and good-natured. His surroundings made him a man of the world, and though he read its weaknesses, he also realised its merits. Judging his fellow-men with discrimination and insight, he turned his *Every-Day Characters* into effective sketches; worth all the more, because he looked upon his models with a kindly eye. The picture of *The Vicar* is charming:

> "Some years ago, ere time or taste
> Had turned our parish topsy-turvy,
> When Darnel Park was Darnel Waste,
> And roads as little known as scurvy,

The man who lost his way between
St. Mary's Hill and Sandy Thicket,
Was always shown across the Green,
And guided to the Parson's wicket. . . .

" His talk was like a stream, which runs
With rapid change from rocks to roses;
It slipped from politics to puns,
It passed from Mahomet to Moses;
Beginning with the laws which keep
The planets in their radiant courses,
And ending with some precept deep
For dressing eels or shoeing horses. . . .

" And he was kind, and loved to sit
In the low hut, or garnished cottage,
And praise the farmer's homely wit,
And share the widow's homelier pottage.
At his approach, complaint grew mild;
And when his hand unbarred the shutter,
The clammy lips of fever smiled
The welcome which they could not utter.

" Sit in the Vicar's seat; you'll hear
The doctrine of a gentle Johnian,
Whose hand is white, whose tone is clear,
Whose phrase is very Ciceronian.
Where is the old man laid? look down,
And construe on the slab before you,
'Hic jacet GVLIELMVS BROWN,
Vir nullâ non donandus lauru.'"

Wicket, the wicket gate.
Hic jacet. "Here lies William Brown, a man not presented with any laurel." The epitaph written for himself by the modest Doctor.

Mrs. Hemans and Mrs. Landor, two amiable ladies, saved verse from absolute decay. They were not vigorous or powerful writers, tending towards sentimentality, though the sentiment was always pure and true. Mrs. Hemans had a real gift for melodious verse, and an expression that was never tawdry or objectionable. The opening stanzas of her poems were often extremely good, though she had not the power of sustaining them through an entire poem.

Mrs. Landor possessed a greater gift of keeping all her verses at equal vigour; and both of them exercised a good influence, and did much to improve the taste of their time. Mrs. Hemans was the more womanly of the two. She had made an unfortunate marriage when she was only eighteen, and was obliged to live apart from her husband for nearly all her married life. She died at the age of forty-one, a notable sign of her capacity for verse being shown by the improvement of her later productions upon her first. *Despondency and Aspiration*, written in 1835, *the year she* died, is a poem of lofty theme and refined expression.

A poet of beautiful thought and style was Thomas Hood, the son of a London bookseller. He was always in delicate health, and died of consumption in his forty-seventh year. His power of song-writing was remarkably good, though he wrote too little in this way; and he excelled in poems of a meditative strain and on a mournful theme. He brought England to tears with his *Song of the Shirt* and *The Bridge of Sighs*; and then in *The Haunted House* and *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies* showed his pathetic skill, without the tragic sorrow of the two greater poems.

Sir Henry Taylor, the son of a country squire, received an appointment at the Colonial Office, and retired in 1872, after nearly fifty years of faithful and useful government service. He was a cultivated man, with refined literary tastes; and had by nature the gift of writing his *Autobiography* in a manner that caused no offence or pain to any of his friends. He is known best for his plays, though like many others of the nineteenth century, they were more fit to be read as poems than for representation upon the stage. His historical drama, *Philip van Artevelde*, was lacking in passion, and even in interest of plot. His characters were drawn as if they were puppets. He gave the outlines and related the actions of these figures with all correctness, yet the delineation made little or no impression. Sir Henry Taylor realised that the drama of the mid-century needed a more intellectual basis than had ever been given to it. Philip Bailey, a poetaster, a friend and great admirer of Sir Henry Taylor, tried to induce him to strengthen his play; but Sir Henry thought that, as no one else had made the attempt, it would be presumptuous for him to try.

Bailey brought out a poem in 1839, entitled *Festus*; dealing, for a subject, with the Problems of the Universe. *Festus* received a great welcome, for it had no originality; and so, in spite of its length, it was easy to read.

Richard Hengist Horne, in 1837, published two tragedies, *Cosmo de Medici* and *The Death of Marlowe*. A third, *Gregory the Seventh*, appeared in 1840. Horne's dramas were vigorous and strong, and were thought much of in their time. They were not perfect in the technique required by dramas for representation, and could only hold a place in the world of letters. Three years after the production of *Gregory the Seventh*, Horne's epic poem *Orion* appeared; a classical epic, with a philosophical

Philip van Artevelde, the leader of a Socialistic movement at Ghent, was closely connected with Wat Tyler in 1381.

Gregory the Seventh, one of the most celebrated Popes. He was elected in 1073; and in 1077, having a great quarrel with King Henry the Third of England, he retired to his stronghold at Canossa, and kept the king waiting at his door in the frost and snow for the space of three days.

basis, "intended," in Horne's own words, ". . . to work out a special design, by means of antique or classical associations, . . . of the struggle of man with himself, *i.e.*, the contest between the intellect and the senses." Horne, for his verse, took Keats as his model.

William Barnes, writing *Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect*, began his work in 1833, and published it in 1879. Like a true poet, he composed his poems for true love of his art, not for popular applause.

London Lyrics, by Frederick Locker, represented as accurately as Barnes' poems a different aspect of English life. Barnes drew most faithful pictures of the cottage and farmyard as he knew them; Locker dealt with the complicated lives of those who have personal work in state politics and diplomacy. He gave an accurate account of those who belonged to the great world, with regard to their official lives, their duties, their sorrows, their cares, and their sacrifices. Locker painted the tender life and private happiness of the same people in the happiest manner. In both kinds of this study he far surpassed the novels of Lord Beaconsfield. Locker did in verse what Miss Austen, Thackeray, and Trollope had done in prose.

84. The Two Great Poets of the Age—Tennyson and Browning. Mrs. Browning.

(1) Lord Tennyson (1809-1892).

It is interesting to notice that, though the poetry of the nineteenth century during its earliest years was reflective, a change made itself felt almost immediately at the beginning of the new reign; for while Wordsworth had only given an introspective study of his own character, Lord Tennyson dealt with all the subjective tendencies of his time. Both had great sympathy for life, and Tennyson a keen perception of its incidents; both employed their verse in the expression of religious and philosophic thought. *The Prelude* and *In Memoriam* each contained a searching of its writer's heart, and a confession of all his hopes and fears. There *The Prelude* entirely stopped, while Tennyson dealt with the altered views of a whole community. A few lines from the poem will speak for themselves. Wordsworth had come to regard his own imagination as the result of his childhood's fancyings and questionings.

> "O mystery of man, from what a depth
> Proceed thy honours! I am lost, but see
> In simple childhood something of the base
> On which thy greatness stands; but this I feel,
> That from thyself it comes, that thou must give,
> Else never canst receive."

On such a subject, Tennyson's work was wider and deeper. His poem, *In Memoriam*, a long lament on the death of his dearest friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, fell into four parts, the first containing twenty-seven sets of verses and dealing with an analysis of the poet's grief. It ended with the well-known stanza:

> "I hold it true, whate'er befall;
> I feel it, when I sorrow most;
> 'Tis better to have loved and lost
> Than never to have loved at all."

The second division, up to the seventy-seventh poem, was occupied with Tennyson's thought on the nature of Death and of the Life beyond. The next division, continuing to the hundred and third poem, was an application of his friend's example to his own life; the last division contained his hopes of a great future for the world, suggested by the pure life that Hallam had led. Tennyson then passed from his own self-absorption to more reflection of his friend, and resolved himself to act for the sake of others, developing a faith in the future which Providence had appointed for mankind. The composition of the poem occupied nine years. It was not published until 1850, and then won for Tennyson the post of Poet Laureate. The metre previously used by Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Ben Jonson, and Dante Rossetti, in Tennyson's hands became freshened and renewed.

The *Idylls of the King*, as now arranged, seem to represent a type of conscience borne down by worldly passion. They begin with an account of Arthur's mysterious origin, of his marriage, and of his victories over the heathen. One of the idylls shows the influences that led the young knights to serve Arthur so faithfully. Guinevere's fall is touched upon, and Merlin, the great magician, is drawn as susceptible to the influences which surround the Queen. The tragedy of Lancelot and Elaine discloses the corruption of the Court. A violent climax occurs, and Arthur pines away, though he does not die. A hope that good may come out of evil is all that remains.

The tone of the *Idylls* is one of unreality. They are neither pictures of modern life nor of mediæval. The charm of the verse is in its richness of colour and unique melody. The incidental lyrics are perfect. Tennyson's verse is famous for its clearness of expression, and for the sense of music which governs every line.

Lord Herbert of Cherbury, 1582-1648, a scholarly man, educated at Oxford, and travelled abroad, making acquaintance with the great scholars of the time, and eventually appointed ambassador at Paris. Seven years later he retired into private life, and gave himself up to literature.

The basis of Tennyson's teaching was his respect for law. He recognised its existence in the spiritual and material worlds, and saw in it a plan of set purposes underlying the mass of order and disorder; while, at the same time, a development among them always tended towards completion. He applied his idea of Universal Law much as Wordsworth conceived the omnipresence of Thought, and Shelley the eternal existence of Love; though Tennyson's belief in the Universal Law embraced both theories. In the workings of nature he traced everywhere the designs of God.

"That God, which ever lives and loves
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

From this law, Tennyson believes in the necessity of human action being governed by discipline. Such a movement as the French Revolution he regards as a stumbling-block in the way of real liberty. Those who take part in such efforts,

"But fire to blast the hope of men."

So, in his lyrics and ballads, he lauds the true discipline which makes one of the highest forms of patriotism. He has the foresight to see, and the courage to denounce, the evil of modern days:

"Step by step we rose to greatness—thro' the tonguesters we may fall."

Tennyson had always a nobility of thought. His poetry was full of honour and reverence for everything pure and true. He purposely avoided analysis of character, in obedience to the restraint of a scholarly mind; so his work was never blemished with the indelicate phantasies of the would-be Romantic.

His longer poems dealt with the questions of the times. *Locksley Hall* contained much of the early Victorian Liberalism; *Locksley Hall, Sixty Years After*, expressed grave doubts as to the tendencies of Democracy. *The Palace of Art* concerned itself only with the worship of Beauty. *The Two Voices* describe how the self-analysis of the age discussed the problem of existence; to find "all solutions vain, except those offered by the conscience or the heart." *Maud*, written at the time just before the Crimean War, when years of peace had developed trade, and England worshipped Mammon, was the protest of the cultivated mind against sordid conditions. *In Memoriam* recorded the sorrow of an unspeakable loss, and the futile help of philosophic doubt. The sorrow was only lessened by the hope that Life triumphed beyond Death; and by remembering

"That all, as in some piece of Art,
Is Toil, co-operant to an end."

(2) Robert Browning (1812-1889).

Robert Browning, born at Camberwell, the son of a city man, was not sent to either a public school or to a university. He was privately taught, and in 1833 produced his first poem, *Pauline*, which he afterwards declared he had retained "purely of necessity." *Pauline* was remarkable for its dramatic tone, though it was a poem in form.

Paracelsus, two years later, had a definite dramatic shape; and the character studies of Paracelsus and his friend Festus were distinct and strong. The verse was lifelike and vigorous; and the lyrics scattered throughout the poem were original. *Sordello*, three years after *Paracelsus*, aroused much adverse criticism. It was the "story of a soul," and written in so curious a manner that many doubted whether Browning was a poet or not. The question was definitely settled between 1841 and 1846, by *Bells and Pomegranates*, a series of poems; where, with *Pippa Passes* and some charming lyrical work, Browning entirely justified his position. In the year that the series finished with *A Soul's Tragedy*, Browning married a Miss Elizabeth Barrett, and lived at Florence until her death in 1861. These fifteen years only saw the writing of two books, *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, in 1850; and *Men and Women*, in 1855. They formed the best part of Browning's work, though the *Dramatis Personæ* of 1864 was almost their equal. *The Ring and the Book*, a poem of twenty thousand verses, was well received in 1869. The reading public had come to understand Browning; and, encouraged by success, he published a poem nearly every year for the following fifteen years. The best were *Balaustion's Adventure*, *Fifine at the Fair*, and *Red-Cotton Night-Cap Country*.

Two of his latest works were *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance* and *Asolando*, filled with more lyrics of great beauty. The rest were written in Browning's curious blank verse, eccentric in its phraseology.

Browning believed that action was the one necessity of human life; and our earnest hopes must often be frustrated, and our efforts fail, yet the hope and the effort helped us to prepare for another state of existence. He also accepted the theory of an individual soul passing from body to body in a series of existences, until it reached full development. The highest love he regarded as being that which would continue through different cycles of existence.

His poetry, analytic in method, traced the reasonings and displayed the emotions of the minds of various characters. He was wanting in the dramatic instinct of Shakspere; for though he so strongly advocated action, his dramas were entirely lacking

in its representation; and this over-analysis of character unfitted them for the purposes of the stage. Browning could conceive a character that in other hands would have been dramatically rendered, but he did not himself possess the real capacity of dramatic construction.

A characteristic of modern poetry has been its attention to the interests of its writer, rather than to the general interests of humanity. Browning writes of themes interesting to himself, and lays stress on the necessity of every reader regarding them from his point of view. Therefore "the life of his art depends entirely on his individuality," and in consequence he does not appeal to his readers like the greater poets, who sympathised with mankind.

Elizabeth Moulton Barrett, the wife of Robert Browning, was as a poetess her husband's superior. Her poetry to a great extent reflected her own life. Long years of illness, through which Browning nursed her with the tenderest affection, prevented her from ever making much acquaintance with the outside world. Her verse was full of tenderness and sympathy for suffering, with a great love for children, and with many similes and metaphors taken from child life.

Her sacred poems, *The Seraphim* and the *Drama of Exile*, unfortunately suggested a comparison with Milton. Mrs. Browning's verse was wanting in arrangement; abstract terms were too frequently employed, and the verse itself was slipshod. Her ballads were simple and easy to be understood, and in many of them there was a weird charm. Her liking for the classics was shown in *The Death of Pan*, *The Wine of Cyprus*, and *The Musical Instrument*, the last a singularly happy production, though its tone was modern and not classical.

The *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, in other words, sonnets written to her husband before their marriage, "unlocked her heart," and made her speak in all humility; they are distinguished by their simple expression, and are pathetic in their references to her sufferings.

Aurora Leigh, written towards the close of her life, was a novel told in verse, with an improbable plot and many prosaic passages. It attracted attention on account of being to some extent an autobiography. Its best feature was a description of the joys of motherhood.

85. Two Classical Poets—Clough and Matthew Arnold.

(1) Arthur Clough (1819-1861).

Clough, born at Liverpool, was the son of James Butler *Clough*, member of an old Welsh family. When the child was

four years old, his parents emigrated to America; and Arthur's childhood was passed at Charleston. He was naturally clever; and from his mother he learnt the stories of the Greek heroes and statesmen, of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and of the Waverley Novels.

After the family's return to England in 1828, Arthur was sent to school at Chester, and afterwards to Rugby, where he became a great favourite with Dr. Arnold. When he left Rugby to go to Balliol, he came under the influence of W. G. Ward, one of the leaders of the Tractarian movement; and on Ward entering the Church of Rome, Clough, who had been elected to a fellowship at Oriel, threw it up to become a Free-thinker.

Clough was to a great extent affected by the nineteenth century Scepticism, which had neither courage to believe nor strength to disbelieve. In many ways he desired to change from his early orthodoxy, yet was never able to come to a decision. His two conditions of mind were always in conflict with one another; and the greater part of his poetry is tinged with regret at their disagreement.

He married in 1854, and lived quietly at home for the next seven years, devoting himself to his children. He held a post at the Education Office, where the work was too much for his strength; and taking some leave, travelled through Greece, and towards the end of his tour visited Turkey and Constantinople. He returned to England, feeling very much better, in the month of June; but before two months had passed, it was necessary for him to leave England again; and going this time to Auvergne, he went on to the Pyrenees. In September his wife joined him at Paris, and they set off for Italy by way of the Italian lakes. Here he caught a chill, from which he never recovered. A malarial fever struck him down at Florence, and in October, 1861, he died in his forty-third year. He was personally a man of charming manners and beautiful disposition. His early death seems to have been hastened by a moral and intellectual strain, too heavy for him to bear. In a characteristic poem he speaks of himself:

"Say not, the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been, they remain.

"If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

"For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

"And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright."

(2) Matthew Arnold (1822-1888).

Arnold's poems showed his distaste for the Romantic feeling of the times; and he adopted in his work a classical tone, which reached almost to the level of Gray.

His poetry recognised and lamented the spiritual unrest of the present day, and the vainness of any attempt to bring it under control; an attitude which strengthened his taste for an austerity in poetry, and his liking for classical models. Arnold became an essentially intellectual poet, and devoted himself to the aim of self-culture. He was a steady foe to commercialism, and to the hurried existence of modern life.

His two tragedies, *Merope* and *Eurydice*, illustrate the weak points of nineteenth century dramatic work. They are wanting in all the necessary points of a drama. *Merope* has neither life nor interest; and the chorus, no harmony. The second drama, of the philosopher who lamented the decadence of true philosophy, is an unfitting subject to attempt in a drama. A change is shown in two narrative poems, *Balder Dead* and *Sohrab and Rustum*, both written after the manner of Homer. There is in them a sonorous blank verse and a stately expression; for Arnold had tried his utmost to follow the methods of Milton.

In many other ways he resembled Andrew Marvell; for to both had been given romantic sympathy and grace, added to a delicacy of style and a classical finish. The result of their work was a pronouncement of good thought by beautiful expression. A slight influence was exercised on Arnold by Gray, and a greater one by Wordsworth.

His lyrics had always an intellectual note, since they interpreted Arnold's own moods, and were endowed with his personal feelings. They were nearly all touched with melancholy; a "sad lucidity of soul," especially visible in *Urania* and *Self-Dependence*. Arnold's *Sonnets*, though few in number, have the sonority of his blank verse. His elegiac poems, *Thyrsis*, the Scholar Gypsy, and *Westminster Abbey*, proved that he could write as a true poet. *Thyrsis*, commemorating the death of Arthur Hugh Clough, Arnold's great friend, has been rightly described as "one of the three finest English elegies."

86. The Romantic Poets—G. C. D. Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, James Thomson, William Morris.

(1) Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti (1828-1882).

It has been already shown how a feeling of indifferent discontent spread over certain classes in England at the earlier part of the nineteenth century. Various efforts were made to meet this disturbance of the accustomed beliefs, and to arrive at some compromise between the older theories and the pronounced ideas of newer systems. All these criticisms were expressed in different ways. Some were as contrary as the Oxford Movement and the Pre-Raphaelite theories. The Tractarians declared that methods of Reason and Authority must both exist; the Pre-Raphaelites taught that the æsthetic world was superior to, and apart from, the intellectual world. The cheerfulness of Browning was checked by the melancholy of Arnold.

A modification of these tendencies was advocated by many leading writers. Thackeray, Carlyle, and Tennyson all showed that the admiration of Beauty must not supersede the control of Intellect; and the Pre-Raphaelites, in poetry, did not do much by themselves until they began to follow the Pre-Raphaelites in art.

A new group arose, known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, founded by one who was both artist and poet, Gabriel Dante Rossetti. He strenuously supported the chief tenet of the society, that their object was "to paint nature as it was around them, with the aid of modern science."

The Romantic spirit, claiming to be represented by Rossetti's poetry, was supposed to consist of "an ever-present apprehension of the Spiritual World, and of the struggle of the soul with earthly conditions." His poetry was, therefore, a mixture of mysticism and symbolism, coloured with a tinge of the mediæval and supernatural. According to Rossetti's theories, a deep spiritual significance was conveyed by the beauty of all Nature's charms.

His poem of *The Blessèd Damozel*, written for *The Germ*, the Pre-Raphaelite organ, was regarded as an exposition of these theories, and attracted a great deal of attention. The poem was hardly an original one conceived by Rossetti; it was based on a passage from Dante's *Paradiso*, where the Virgin speaks to the poet from the moon. The depth of the maiden's eyes, deeper than waters stilled at even, is taken almost word for word from the Italian—"water clear and tranquil, not from its depth, but because its bed is bluish-gray." The numbers three and seven are the mystical and holy numbers of ancient rites. In the same way, further on in the poem, the names of the Virgin Mary's handmaidens are given in a stanza hinting at a

garden of flowers, where between lilies and roses, slender white and rosy maidens are pacing to and fro. The damozel is thinking of the time when her lost love will join her.

"The blessèd damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven. . . .

"It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is space begun;
So high, that looking downward, thence
She scarce could see the sun.

"It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

"Heard hardly, some of her new friends,
Amid their loving games,
Spake evermore among themselves
Their virginal chaste names,
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

"'We two,' she said, 'will seek the groves
Where the Lady Mary is
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies—
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret, and Rosalys.'"

Cecily, the Dim-sighted.
Gertrude, the Spear Maiden.
Magdalen, the Heroine.
Margaret, the Pearl.
Rosalys, the Little Rose.

Rossetti believed that by such means he could blend different sympathies, and interweave the feelings of human love and religious devotion.

Rossetti's best work is to be found in his *Sonnets*. *The House of Life*, a series of a hundred and one, set forth his mystic views on existence and on love. The title is a phrase of astrology, signifying that human life is ruled and pervaded by the triple influence of Love, Fate, and Change.

Another charming group, songs of love and admiration, was written in honour of the English poets. Many other sonnets are not arranged in series. The most interesting refer to the paintings of his friends, and to some of his own pictures.

(2) Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894).

Miss Rossetti, sister of Dante Gabriel, sat to her brother for his picture of *The Girlhood of the Virgin*, and afterwards for one of the sorrowing queens in *La Morte d'Arthur*. Miss Rossetti lived an extremely quiet life, devoted to her mother and her own religion. She had been brought up as a member of the Church of England, and remained faithful to it for the whole of her life. Her poetical work was produced between 1861 and 1895, the year of her death. Her first volume was *Goblin Market*, and her next *The Prince's Progress*. Both of these, in their first editions, were illustrated by her brother. *A Pageant* appeared in 1881, and a number of religious poems were written in her last years.

Miss Rossetti was the best poetess that England had known. The only one who stood in any rivalry to her was Mrs. Browning; and though she had not the power of writing a poem of length, she surpassed Mrs. Browning in poetic form.

The Prince's Progress was, in many respects, superior to *Goblin Market*. It showed an increase of dignity and a freedom from mannerism, which were both well sustained in *A Pageant and other Poems*. The little song here given shows the spirit of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, without any of its drawbacks:

An Echo.

"Love, strong as Death, is dead,
Come, let us make his bed
Among the dying flowers:
A green turf at his head;
And a stone at his feet,
Whereon we may sit
In the quiet evening hours.

"He was born in the spring,
And died before the harvesting:
On the last warm summer day
He left us; he would not stay
For autumn twilight cold and grey.
Sit we by his grave, and sing
He is gone away.

"To few chords sad and low
Sing we so;
Be our eyes fixed on the grass
Shadow-veiled as the years pass,
While we think of all that was
In the long-ago."

(3) James Thomson (1834-1882).

Miss Rosetti expresses the hopeful side of the great mystery

of the Unseen; James Thomson, the second poet of that name in English poetry, expresses the hopeless one:

"I sat me weary on a pillar's base,
And leaned against the shaft; for bright moonlight
O'erflowed the peacefulness of cloistered space,
A shore of shadow slanting from the right;
The great cathedral's western front stood there,
A wave-worn rock in that calm sea of air.

"Before it, opposite my place of rest,
Two figures faced each other, large, austere;
A couchant sphinx, in shadow to the breast,
An angel standing in the moonlight clear;
So mighty by magnificence of form,
They were not dwarfed beneath that mass enorm.

"Upon the cross-hilt of a naked sword
The angel's hands, as prompt to smite, were held;
His vigilant, intense regard was poured
Upon the creature, placidly unquelled,
Whose front was set at level gaze, which took
No heed of aught, with solemn trance-like look.

"And as I pondered these opposèd shapes,
My eyelids sank in stupor, that dull swoon
Which drugs and with a leaden mantle drapes
The outworn to worse weariness. But soon
A sharp and clashing noise the stillness broke,
And from the evil lethargy I woke.

"The angel's wings had fallen, stone on stone,
And lay there shattered; hence the sudden sound;
A warrior leaning on his sword alone,
Now watched the sphinx with that regard profound;
The sphinx, unchanged, looked forthright, as aware
Of nothing in the vast abyss of air.

"Again I sank in that repose unsweet,
Again a clashing noise my slumber rent;
The warrior's sword lay broken at my feet;
An unarmed man with raised hands impotent
Now stood before the sphinx, which ever kept
Such mien as if with open eyes it slept.

"My eyelids sank in spite of wonder grown;
A louder crash upstartled me in dread;
The man had fallen forward, stone on stone,
And there lay shattered, with his trunkless head
Between the monster's large quiescent paws,
Beneath its grand front, changeless as life's laws.

"The moon had circled westward full and bright,
And made the temple-front a mystic dream,
And bathed the whole enclosure with its light,
The sworded angel's wrecks, the sphinx supreme;
I pondered long that cold majestic face
Whose vision seemed of infinite void space."

(4) William Morris (1834-1896).

William Morris, the son of a well-to-do merchant, was educated at Marlborough and Exeter College, Oxford. As an undergraduate, he was a frequent contributor to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*; and in his twenty-fourth year, after he had left the University, he brought out his first volume, *The Defence of Guenevere, and other Poems.* It was liked by many and detested by more, for its contents gave the promise of work which, in after years, acquired for him the name of The Troubadour. Among the poems, *The Wind* and *The Blue Closet* were favourites, and the melody of the verse and the grace of the ideas presented showed Morris's work to be of a new and remarkable kind.

In 1866 appeared *The Life and Death of Jason*, a poem in rhymed heroics, not limited to separate couplets, but permitted to run along, to complete whole sentences. There were many traces of Chaucer, of Browne and Wither, and still more of Keats. Like Keats, Morris followed the old English Romantic writers, the result being especially noticeable in the lyrics and odes scattered throughout *Jason*, excellent in expression and entirely different from the classic strains of Collins or Gray.

Between 1868 and 1870, *The Earthly Paradise*, in four volumes, told twelve romantic and twelve classical tales, variously written in stanzas, in the regular eight-syllabled lines arranged as couplets, and in the run-on lines. *The Earthly Paradise* went to the furthest point in the supernatural.

Morris then attempted some translations of Homer and Virgil, but their tales did not please the readers of romance, nor did their scholarship satisfy the scholars. His poem of *Love is Enough*, in 1873, had little success, and it was not until 1877, by the excellent anapæsts of *Sigurd the Volsung*, that his reputation was firmly established.

The last ten years of his life were given to romantic verse again, when six poems showed his real powers. *The House of the Wolfings*, *The Roots of the Mountains*, *The Well at the World's End*, and *The Sundering Flood* have been regarded as better than *The Story of the Glittering Plain* or *The Water of the Wondrous Isles.* His verse has been praised in glowing terms for its "lambent easy light and misty moonlight, shot with

Troubadour, a singer, a word derived from the Greek *trópos*, Latin *tropus*, signifying a turn, way, manner, or particular mode in music. The word 'Trope,' a figure of speech, implies the use of a word or expression changed from its original meaning to another for the sake of giving emphasis to an idea. The troubadour is an itinerant singer, who sings songs with hidden meanings.

auroral colours." It was always free from aggressive passion, and came as a revival of the ballad verse of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It helped to take Englishmen back to the days of their predecessors, and acted as a relief to the bustle and worry of the nineteenth century.

We have to conclude our notices of contemporary poets with that of one who will always stand high in the memories of Englishmen, and be remembered as the most fascinating singer of the second half of the nineteenth century. A. C. Swinburne's first appearance as a poet was made in 1865, with his lyrical drama of *Atalanta in Calydon*, written in close resemblance to true Greek methods. It was followed next year by *Poems and Ballads*, a volume becoming so popular that a number of disciples gathered together and formed a Swinburne School. In 1878 came the second volume of *Poems and Ballads*. Among the rest of his poems *Chastelard*, a tragedy, is famous for its lyrics, and its song "Between the Sundown and the Sea." Four more tragedies, *Bothwell*, *Erechtheus*, *Mary Stuart*, and *Marino Faliero*, are full of Swinburne's love for pathetic as well as tragic subjects. *Songs before Sunrise*, *Songs of the Spring-tides*, *Tristram of Lyonesse*, and *A Century of Roundels* display the range and constant vigour of his best work. Swinburne, with a great command of language, understood to perfection the laws and the possibilities of metre; powers which gave to his poems a sense of active movement and excitement. While Tennyson's poems were often songs of rest and melancholy, Swinburne's *Chorus in Atalanta* is a sustained and stately cry of joy. In *The Triumph of Time*, his metre is as the wash and the roll of the sea.

87. Two Great Historians — Lord Macaulay and Thomas Carlyle.

(1) Lord Macaulay (1800-1859).

Lord Macaulay and Thomas Carlyle, like Gibbon, were men of letters as well as historians. The difference between them was that Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* was scholarly and thorough, while the work of both the others lacked accuracy, and was swayed by personal feeling.

Macaulay's father, the son of a Scotch minister, carried on a business in Jamaica and Sierra Leone. He made a moderate fortune, and returned to England in 1799, living at Clapham, a village in those days entirely separate from London, with a life and interest of its own. The residents, like Mr. Macaulay, had chiefly made their money in trade. In these surroundings, Thomas Macaulay passed his childhood and early years. He *was not* sent to any of the public schools, and at about twelve

years old went under the care of an Evangelical clergyman, then living at Shelford, a pretty village a few miles out of Cambridge.

In his nineteenth year, he entered at Trinity College, Cambridge, where, in October, 1824, he was elected a Fellow. His University career showed plainly the bent of his mind. The mathematical studies which then absorbed so much time at Cambridge had little attraction for him. He turned his attention to classics, gaining the Craven Scholarship, and twice carrying off the Chancellor's medal for English verse. His days at the University, the happiest of his life, gave him what he had lacked in childhood—a companionship with those of his own age.

Macaulay had won a University prize, set "On the Conduct and Character of William the Third"; an early effort, in which the points of his later style began. When he had taken his degree, and was waiting for a fellowship, he worked hard at composition, and in 1825 wrote an article on Milton, which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*. Francis Jeffrey, the best critic of the day, declared in a letter to Macaulay, "The more I read it, the less can I conceive where you picked up that style."

Of his political life, little can be said here. His friends, chiefly on the Whig side, after a long absence from office, were waiting for a return to power. Lord Lansdowne offered Macaulay a seat in the House of Commons, for young men of talent were more than acceptable. As an acknowledgment of his speeches supporting Reform, Macaulay was returned in 1832 to represent the new borough of Leeds. Two years later, he was made President of a Law Commission for India, and appointed a member of the Supreme Council. This led to the holding of lucrative offices in India, where he stayed for two years and a half. Upon his return to England, he was anxious to put politics aside and to devote his time to literature; but the Whigs were still so weak that they begged him to join them again, and his political career lasted until 1846.

Macaulay then began to write the first two volumes of his *History*, and the various biographies which appeared in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. By many critics these biographies have been regarded as the most polished of all his writings. The last two volumes of the *History* came out in 1855; he received a peerage, as Baron Macaulay of Rothley; and in 1859 he died, his life shortened by the strenuous work of many years.

Macaulay in his literary work was an excellent verse-writer, though not a poet. He had a command of rhythm and metre,

and could produce stanzas full of vigour and strength, even if they were wanting in melody. His imperfection of ear prevented him from writing musical verse, and as he never understood the real spirit of poetry, his *Ballads* were wanting in emotion. A keen observer and delineator of the human intellect, his verses, though with plenty that stirs the blood, have not much that touches the feelings.

This fault was not so marked in the case of the *Essays* and the *History*, for Macaulay, content with being straightforward and energetic, never attained to the harmonies of Hooker, Jeremy Taylor, or Ruskin. The *Essays* varied in merit; the one on Johnson, undeniably good, was weakened by its inaccurate picture of Boswell. Macaulay seemed to have regarded him as a sycophant, without any genuine admiration for his patron; as a matter of fact, Boswell's love and friendship for Johnson were perfectly genuine.

The best of Macaulay's *Essays* is probably the one on *Hallam's Constitutional History*, where the passages on Hampden will always be remembered as good examples of graceful and touching style. The *Essay on Walpole* is unjust, for Macaulay undervalued Walpole's powers of intellect, more penetrating and thoughtful than his own. The *Essay on Temple* is excellent, and those on literary subjects, in spite of some obvious errors, have a power of arousing interest.

The Indian Essays on Clive and Warren Hastings are unrivalled so far as picturesque handling of the subject, strength and vivacity of narrative, and arrangement and comprehensive grouping of matter are concerned. Many of the historical essays are famous, though the *Life of Pitt*, written towards the end of Macaulay's own career, is infinitely better than the essay. An excellent criticism of the *Essays* has declared that for "the first draft of a subject, Macaulay is incomparable . . . the height and depth of a subject he never gives."

Macaulay shows himself deficient in real historical spirit. The merits and faults of the *Essays* can both be seen on a larger scale in the famous *History of England*. There is absent from it any generalised view of the period and events with which it deals. He has not grasped to any true extent the import or meaning of the Stuart period. He never accounts for any phase of thought, any institution, or any policy, by tracing it back to its original sources, and by showing from what circumstances it resulted. All that he does is to describe attractively what those circumstances might have been at the time of which he was writing. These descriptions, brilliant and vigorous, are wanting in judicial feeling. Unlike Gibbon, Macaulay avoided the sonorous sentence, and made his own short and abrupt.

Such sentences generally prove to be nothing more than the antithetic periods of Gibbon; but instead of being arranged in one harmonious sentence, they are broken up into small pieces, with the idea that by so doing, they will attract a greater attention. Macaulay's incapacity for music is thus explained; for by this breaking up of the long sentence, all possibility of musical expression is lost.

It has been suggested that Macaulay's great fault was his "absolute want of ethics. He has no reflections on love or marriage, on friendship or religious faith, or on the bringing-up of children." The writer probably forgot that Macaulay never married. From the day that his father's misfortunes put on him the burden of the whole family, to the day when, successful but overworked, he died, Macaulay was the kindest and most generous of sons, of brothers, and of uncles. Qualities such as those related by his nephew, in the *Life* of his uncle, endear Macaulay far more to us than do his onslaughts upon political foes.

(2) Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881).

At the extreme opposite to Macaulay stands Carlyle. There were great differences in bringing up, in experiences, and in careers between the two men; differences touching their writings as much as their characters.

Carlyle was born in Ecclefechan, a small Dumfriesshire village, in 1795. His father, at first a stone-mason and then a farmer, was a straightforward sagacious man, notorious in the district for his sarcastic tongue. Carlyle's mother seems to have been a woman of much gentler disposition, with strong religious feeling and keen sensibility. Carlyle was a quiet and retiring child, shunning the rude customs of his people; for his father and his elder brothers were known by the suggestive title of the "fighting masons of Ecclefechan." After a beginning at the village school, Carlyle was sent to the Annan Academy when he was about seven years old, and there remained for seven years more, a period of great bitterness and sorrow.

In 1810, being then not quite fourteen, Carlyle entered the University of Edinburgh, where mathematical work was the only kind that offered any attraction to him, and in this he had considerable success. The intention of his father in sending him to the University had been to qualify him for the ministry; but by the time of Carlyle's departure from Edinburgh, his own wishes had definitely changed, and to the sorrow of his parents, he refused to take orders. The question of education had been a difficult point for them always. When they were about to send him to the Annan school, a neighbour said to his father,

"Educate a boy, and he grows up to despise his ignorant parents." Carlyle's father told him this years after; and added, "Thou hast not done so, God be thanked for it."

In 1814 he obtained the post of mathematical teacher at his old school, Annan Academy, and two years later removed to Kirkcaldy, a town on the seashore of Fife. Here he renewed his acquaintance with Edward Irving, another old Annan boy, and between the two a devoted friendship sprang up. A couple of happy years passed at Kirkcaldy, until Carlyle found it expedient to leave. He returned to Edinburgh, with the intention of continuing his studies, but broke down from overstrain, going through more than two years of unutterable misery. He spent the summers at home, wandering over the hills and moors; and his winter terms in Edinburgh, trying to get employment, and to complete his reading. *Sartor Resartus* is full of the history of this unhappy time, and of the victim's Baphometic baptism. The final battle with the Everlasting No occurred in the June of 1821; a victory assisted by the fact that he had made the acquaintance of Jane Baillie Welsh in May.

The next three or four years were passed in constant study, in working at German, and in writing articles. The two most important works Carlyle achieved were a translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, issued in 1824, and a *Life of Schiller*, which appeared in 1825. In 1826 came a great event, and a crisis in his life. He married Miss Welsh, with whom he acquired a moderate fortune, enough to relieve him from the necessity of continuing his hack work; and a visit paid to Germany brought about a personal acquaintance with Goethe, for whom Carlyle cherished a deep admiration. From 1826 to 1834 Carlyle continued to live in Scotland; the first two years at Edinburgh, the remaining six at Craigenputtoch. This was a small property belonging to his wife, about a day's journey distant from Ecclefechan. It was then that he wrote the *Sartor Resartus*, which appeared first as a series of magazine articles.

In 1834 the Carlyles moved to London, and settled in the little house in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, that was so long associated with their name. During the years 1837 to 1840 Carlyle gave courses of lectures in London, which made a great sensation; and when Carlyle's books began to appear, the fame of the lectures added to their success. It was as far back as the first

Sartor Resartus, the patched-up tailor, the man with garments repaired.

Baphomet, a corruption of Mahomet, the Arabian prophet. It was applied to a symbolic figure supposed to be used by the Knights Templars in secret rites, where fire was the test of their baptism.

The Everlasting No, the emphatic declaration of Teufelsdröckh that he would no longer fear his troubles and sorrows (*Sartor Resartus*, ch. VII.).

part of his residence that he wrote the opening volume of the *History of the French Revolution.* The manuscript of the first volume was accidently destroyed, and the publication had to be delayed until 1837. When the volumes appeared, the days of Carlyle's want and trouble were over; though by this time he was two-and-forty years of age. In 1838 *Sartor Resartus* appeared in book form, as did the first volume of the *Miscellanies*, in which is some of the best work he ever produced. *Chartism*, in the following year, was an attack upon the corruption of the modern social system, and of the futility of all schemes of reform. *Past and Present*, another book dealing with the conditions of the state, and expounding many views held by Carlyle as to the way in which it should be governed, appeared in 1843. Two years later *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* met with more success than any of his previous books; and in 1850, with the *Latter Day Pamphlets*, he returned to the consideration of social abuses. He followed this with *The Life of John Sterling*, and then occupied himself exclusively with the famous *History of Frederick the Great*, a work not completed for seven years.

In April, 1866, he became Lord Rector of the University of Edinburgh, but sorrow fell upon him at the time of his triumph. His wife died before he could return to London; and the last fifteen years of his life were spent mourning and alone. At Chelsea, on February the 5th, 1881, he died.

There were two things, and two things only, that "interested him—ethical and religious conduct in the individual, and political history in the general." The experiences of his own life, and its disappointments and hardships, gave him some right to pronounce upon the first, when he retired in 1827 to the retreat of Craigenputtoch. On the question of the second, he wisely let himself lie fallow, and meditated for six years upon the books that he afterwards produced. Those same years went far to formulate what has been called the famous *Gospel of Labour*, which declared that the chief end of life is the Performance of Duty. The pursuit of happiness by human beings only aroused in him a contempt; and he exercised his wrath against those who advocated that this happiness was the end and aim of all things.

Duty, however, by itself is an abstract. Some duties must be actually named; and the principal of these is Work. According to Carlyle, all the world has been made a world for us by work; and he who does not lend a hand by helping on this work, fails in his duty as a citizen of the Universe. If he is asked what duty is to be done? His answer is, "Do the Duty which lies nearest to thee"; and he lays stress upon the universal dignity of work. "All true work is religion." "*Laborare est orare*—work is worship."

It is interesting to notice that Carlyle's suggestions on social matters were largely anticipated in William Langland's *Piers the Plowman* and Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*.

Sartor Resartus is based upon a text of Scripture—"As a vesture Thou shall change them, and they shall be changed." Carlyle found that the metaphor of the Hebrew poet, expressing the nothingness of the heavens as compared with the Almighty power, could be applied with equal truth to the complex structure of human society. So, under the guise of a Philosophy of Clothes, *Sartor Resartus* teaches that man, and all the things that he can understand, are merely vestures of the one reality, God.

The book was supposed to be written by Herr Diogenes Teufelsdrockh. The meaning of the name—God-born devil's dirt—was sufficiently suggestive. He was supposed to be the result of a union between an immortal father and an earthly mother. In his head were combined the spirits of Goethe and of Swift. The latter had written, years before, how philosophers "held the universe to be a suit of clothes, which invests everything. Look on this globe of earth. . . . What is that which men call land, but a fine coat faced with green? or the sea, but a waistcoat of water-tabby?" The double strain in his blood is indicated by Teufelsdrockh's name; he has two gospels, the clothes philosophy and an autobiography, which he carries in six zodiacal bags; two apostles, a Peter in Heuschrecke (the grasshopper) and a Thomas in Carlyle. He has two philosophies—he thinks as an idealist, and feels as a realist. Half of the didactic portion of *Sartor Resartus* is taken up with asserting the reality of the Divine Mind, and the purely phenomenal character of all other things; and the other half with the application of the principle to creeds and institutions. These are all declared to be for an age or ages—none are for all time. When the book was slowly making its way in England, Mrs. Carlyle remarked that it was "only completely understood and adequately appreciated by women and mad people. I do not know very well what to infer from the fact."

The French Revolution, as a subject, naturally appealed to Carlyle. He always desired, in his historical work, to deal with the problems of history in such a way as to make his book serviceable for the needs of the time. When writing upon the fact of Rousseau's theories on the equality of man having been seized upon by the Revolutionists for the basis of their beliefs, he pointed out that no disturbance in the history of the world ever illustrated the inevitable inequality of mankind better than did the French Revolution.

His work was distinguished for its life-like representations of

men and things, and for the amount of sound historical study that it displayed. It put him immediately into the highest rank of his literary contemporaries; and after the publication of *Frederick the Great*, until the time of his death, Carlyle was regarded as the most important representative of English literature.

His *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* gave him but little opportunity, such as he had had in the *French Revolution*, for writing his descriptive passages, or making use of powers of narrative. His object was to destroy what seemed to him the harmful view that generally existed of Cromwell. He therefore went to the other extreme, and deprived his work of value.

His last historical work, the *History of Frederick the Second, commonly called the Great*, gave Carlyle much more opportunity for taking advantage of his wonderful powers. The skill of narrative and description had full play. The main story is well kept to the front, and not subordinated to the record of collateral events.

That Carlyle would be a trying man to live with, Mrs. Carlyle knew long before they were married. She took him as her husband with a perfect knowledge of what she would have to endure, but that his love was true and constant, while the brusque manner or his gruff temper were only the expressions of an overstrained and worried mind.

When Carlyle, in 1863, was writing *Frederick*, an invitation came to Mrs. Carlyle and himself to stay at a country house. Carlyle curtly refused; paying calls would be ruin to *Frederick*. Mrs. Carlyle writes humorously to her friend:

> "I'm a poor luckless cretur,
> And if I were ded,
> With a stone at my hed,
> I think 'twould be beter."

A woman who can take her afflictions so lightly is probably not a very discontented or unhappy wife. This is what Carlyle himself says of her: "She wrapped me round a cloak, to keep all the hard and cold world off me. When I came home, sick with mankind, there she was on the sofa, always with a cheerful story of something or somebody, and I never knew that she, poor darling, had been fighting with bitter pain all day. She had never a mean thought or word from the day I first saw her looking like a flower out of the window of her mother's old brick house, my Jeanie, my queen."

Froude's summing-up of Carlyle's character is probably more reliable than his account of the married life. "To the Scotsman and the Puritan," he says, "the Jewish history contained a faithful account of the dealings of God with man in all countries,

and in all ages. As long as they kept God's commandments, all went well; when they followed wealth and enjoyment, God's wrath fell. Commerce, manufactures, political liberty, wealth, improvement were, to Carlyle, only Moloch and Astarte; and now, as then, it is impossible to serve both God and Baal."

88. Two great Novelists—William Makepeace Thackeray and Charles Dickens.

(1) Thackeray (1811-1863).

Thackeray was born at Calcutta, where his father, Richmond Thackeray, the collector of Bengal, in the East India Company's service, was one of the most valued officers of the Company. Richmond Thackeray died four years after the birth of his boy. His wife, only twenty-three at the time, two years afterwards had the additional grief of parting with her little son, then nearly seven. William was sent to England in accordance with the custom which enabled English children to escape from the Indian climate.

William never forgot his beautiful mother, and his first extant letter was written to her, when he heard of her engagement to Captain Carmichael Smyth. Thackeray sends his love to the Captain, "and tell him he must bring you home to your affectionate little son." The separation at last ended by his mother's return to England, and their love for one another never diminished for the whole of their lives. Thackeray died in 1863, and his mother on the first anniversary of his death. The tenderness for women which Thackeray inherited from her, he showered upon his wife, and transmitted to his daughters. It became the principal feature of all his work, the text of all his teaching.

"Canst thou, O friendly reader," he asks, "count upon the fidelity of an artless heart or tender or true, and reckon among the blessings which Heaven hath bestowed on thee the love of faithful women? Purify thine own heart, and try to make it worthy of theirs. All the prizes of life are nothing compared to that one. All the rewards of ambition, wealth, pleasure, only vanity and disappointment grasped at greedily, and fought for fiercely, and over and over again found worthless by the weary winners."

Thackeray was educated at the Charterhouse, called in his earlier novels the Slaughter-house, and in the later ones Grey

Moloch, the fire-god of the Ammonites in Canaan, to whom human sacrifices were offered.

Astarte, the Phœnician goddess of the moon, the Greek Diana.

Baal, the supreme male deity of the Phœnician and Canaanitish nations.

Friars. He went on to Trinity College, Cambridge, and then, having lost all his money, attempted to make his living as an artist. He was unsuccessful, and turned to literature, his work including *The Book of Snobs* and the *Memoirs of Mr. Yellowplush.* These were both humorous books, while the next two stories, *Catherine* and *Barry Lyndon*, were filled with tragedy and pathos.

Thackeray's name became more widely known by the issue of *Vanity Fair*, in monthly parts; and while they were being published, he wrote his *Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, and several Christmas stories. *Pendennis*, the next novel, contained a great part of his autobiography. He undertook some lectures on literature, and published them afterwards as the *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century*, a volume of good description and kindly criticism. With the year 1852 the period of his best and most effective work began. By *The Newcomes*, his wonderful picture of English life, he came to be regarded as the greatest novelist of his day. *The Virginians*, a sequel to *Esmond*, was a novel of life in America during the third quarter of the eighteenth century.

Thackeray in 1860, when editing the *Cornhill Magazine*, wrote two stories, *Lovel the Widower* and *Philip*, and contributed to it his famous *Roundabout Papers.*

He was busy in 1863 with *Denis Duval*, another novel laid in his favourite century; and, being seized with sudden illness, died two days before Christmas, in the fifty-second year of his age.

Thackeray's novels show us examples of writing directly opposite to the romantic work of Scott and Dickens. That work was remarkable for its enthusiasm and the glowing spirit by which its effect was increased. The temper of Thackeray's work was not one of excitement, but rather of restraint. He was always calm, and maintained a clearness and justness of presentment.

For a plot, Thackeray does not take one central event either of public interest, after the manner of Scott, or of a surprising nature, after the manner of Dickens. He prefers a larger canvas, and displays not so much one life as many lives. He follows the fortunes of a family through several generations; the result being a study of the course of human life, as we come to know it by the experience of years. *Vanity Fair* traces the careers of Amelia Osborne and of Becky Sharp from girlhood to middle-age. In *The Newcomes* we are interested not only by the greater part of Clive's manhood, but even in the boyhood of his father. *Philip*, beginning with *The Shabby-Genteel Story*, gives the picture of parent and child. *Esmond* extends over more than

one generation, and *The Virginians* carry the thread of Henry Esmond's story on to the following century.

Scott and Dickens both made great use of incident. With Scott it was picturesque; with Dickens melodramatic. Thackeray preferred events, or series of events, taking the form of episodes, and requiring a more extended treatment than could be used for incident alone. All Thackeray's episodes were essential for the carrying-on of the story; by this means it was made certain that the thread of human interest would never fail.

Thackeray, a novelist of character, was careful in his great books never to sink into caricature. The people he described were of the same as Jane Austen delighted to draw. Scott's characters were intensely human; there is a warmth and vitality about them that has seldom been surpassed, yet all were marked distinctly with the type of their own time. Thackeray laid more stress upon the qualities or points of character which belong to all times, and has received the name of cynic, as a master of the never-changing causes of human action. The word is so used without a knowledge of its meaning. A satirist Thackeray certainly was; a cynic, never.

There were two vices against which Thackeray set his face. One was meanness; the other insincerity. His books were full of scorn and loathing for both, and the subtlety of his writing made many think that he intended literally the passages where his satire found full play. *Vanity Fair* was disliked by some of its readers, because they realised that it laid their own foibles bare.

Thackeray has no false pathos. He never provokes tears by a trick. He knows too well that sorrow and pain are too sacred to be lightly treated. His pathetic work gains by this self-restraint, for he recognises that pathos, to be of the best, must be connected with the sublime. This he shows in two scenes from *Esmond*. The first is Henry Esmond's return from his campaigns, and his meeting with Lady Castlewood after the evening service in Winchester Cathedral; the second is his presentation of the family diamonds to Beatrix Esmond on the eve of her marriage. In both these scenes pathos and emotion are blended with the utmost skill.

Then, in another part of his fiction, he deals with quite a different kind of life; and, in a garret scene, mingles great passions in the humblest surroundings. "Modern romance has no purer, more pathetic, or simpler page than the tale of the death of Samuel Titmarsh's first child."

Satirist. Satires are writings in prose or verse; exposures of misbehaviour which deserve rebuke.

Cynic, a person like an ill-tempered, snarling dog.

"It was not, however, destined that she and her child should inhabit that little garret. We were to leave our lodgings on Monday morning, but on Saturday evening the child was seized with convulsions, and all Sunday the mother watched and prayed for it; but it pleased God to take the innocent infant from us, and on Sunday, at midnight, it lay a corpse upon its mother's bosom. Amen. We have other children, happy and well, round about us, and from the father's heart the memory of this little thing has almost faded; but I do believe that every day of her life the mother thinks of her first-born that was with her so short a while; many and many a time she has taken her daughters to the grave in St. Bride's, where he lies buried; and she wears still at her neck a little, little lock of gold hair, which she took from the head of the infant as he lay smiling in his coffin. It has happened to me to forget the child's birthday, but to her, never; and often in the midst of common talk comes something that shows she is thinking of the child still—some simple allusion that is to me inexpressibly affecting."

(2) Charles Dickens (1812-1870).

From the days of Jane Austen and the Waverleys there was no great novelist until 1836. Then Charles Dickens began his fame with the *Sketches by Boz*, and secured it by *The Pickwick Papers* two years later. Dickens, a man of humble origin, was son of a clerk in the Navy Pay Office. Charles never had any real education, and taught himself the little he knew by studying the people of the streets. He learnt shorthand, and obtained work as a reporter.

Dickens, as a rule, always wished to be independent of any other writer, yet in *Pickwick* there were traces of Smollett and Theodore Hook. They were to a certain extent disguised and strengthened by Dickens, so that the *Sketches* were looked upon as entirely new; while genuine merriment and good-natured tone saved *Pickwick* from being regarded as a mere burlesque.

The two comic books were followed by a pathetic romance, the story of *Oliver Twist*, a poor little boy brought up in a workhouse at the tender mercy of the beadle, Mr. Bumble. It is one of the most satisfactory of Dickens' tales, famous for its pictures of life in a thieves' den, and for the best study of a woman that Dickens ever achieved. Nancy's tragedy is told with an effect all the more powerful for not being exaggerated, and the pathos, which Dickens too often made melodramatic, was carefully restrained.

From *Nicholas Nickleby*, published in 1838, these good qualities fell away, and were recovered in only a few of Dickens' later novels. The story of Nicholas is interesting if sentimental,

though Dickens fell into a fault too often repeated in his subsequent novels. His knowledge of English lives was limited to an acquaintance with the lower and middle classes. It was heightened in its effects by a powerful imagination, sometimes humorous and sometimes grotesque, yet there was always some semblance of reality attaching to it. But when in *Nicholas Nickleby* he sought to portray the manners of "high" life, he could only draw scenes, with disastrous effects, of what he supposed it to be.

The next two stories were the *Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge*, the first one full of Dickens' pathos, which seldom had a true tone. This flaw was compensated for by a description of Dick Swiveller, the Marchioness, Codlin and Short, and Quilp. These characters, in themselves, were extraordinary, and well worked-out conceptions. In *Barnaby Rudge*, the second book, a story of the No Popery Riot of 1780, Dolly Varden, the merchant's daughter, and Miggs, the maid, are again excellent studies. Dennis the hangman, as a contrast, almost equals Quilp.

The novel of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, giving two pictures which have become immortal—of Mrs. Gamp and Mr. Pecksniff—is in itself involved and wanting in attraction. *Dombey and Son*, of 1846 to 1848, showed another example of failing power. The pathos was the same kind as that in the *Old Curiosity Shop*; and while the comic characters, Captain Cuttle and his friend Bunsby, with Toots and Miss Miggs, were clever exaggerations, they were not equal to Dickens' previous grotesques; while the introduction of some other quite impossible personages did the book more harm.

The following years brought a great change, and *David Copperfield* (1849-1850) has ever since ranked as a notable novel. The women characters are badly drawn. Little Dora, David's young wife, is a doll more than a girl, and the putting in of a certain incident immediately after her death is a terrible flaw. A violent contrast is brought about between the one set of characters and the others who are supposed to be humorous. The three studies of Mr. Micawber, Uriah Heep, and Miss Betsy Trotwood are sources of amusement, and impossible as human beings.

Two more long tales, *Bleak House* and *Little Dorrit*, with a shorter story, *Hard Times*, were all marred by being written to advocate certain theories which Dickens accepted. *The Tale of Two Cities*, a story of comparison between London and Paris at the time of the Bastile's fall, is different from any other that Dickens wrote. It is free to some extent from the mannerisms which spoilt so large a portion of his work, while the treatment of the historical portion is incorrect.

Great Expectations is chiefly remarkable for containing the only other female character, after Nancy, that has any reality at all. Dickens in this case took great pains to keep down his previous exaggerations. *Our Mutual Friend*, a dull tale in itself, contained two quaint studies of the doll-dressmaker and of Rogue Riderhood, an accomplished scoundrel.

While Dickens was writing his last novel, *Edwin Drood*, illness seized him, and in 1870 he died. He had won his way to the hearts of the people by his constant flow of humour and the genuine kindliness of his nature. His want of judgment led to false description in many of his stories; and though he had written them with an intense desire for doing good, it prevented them from ranking among the highest of English fiction.

Despite his many technical failings, Dickens was a man of many merits. The greatest humourist of the century, he has well been coupled "with Balzac, the greatest fantastic novelist in the world." His keen and genuine love for humanity endeared him to every one who knew something of the hidden lives in London. Of English country life he had the faintest ideas, most of them incorrect. Dickens' humour much resembled that of Sir Walter Scott, because both by its use aroused pleasure and merriment rather than anger and scorn. To treat with actual kindness, and to describe in writing the poorest and even the meanest of our fellow-creatures with a kindly heart, was Dickens' great gift, and the guiding star of all his life. He could feel for his characters as he felt for himself. He had once been almost like Smike, and then again like David Copperfield; he dearly loved Jo; he sympathised with the Marchioness, with Traddles, and with Barkis. Nancy ended her miserable life as a heroine. Micawber had his pity to the end. In all this delineation, which in other hands would only have been repulsive, Dickens had the other quality of being pure. "I am grateful," wrote Thackeray, when his daughters were grown girls, "for the sweet unsullied pages which the author of *David Copperfield* gives to my children." It would have been difficult in the later years of the century for the writers of some fiction to have received such praise.

89. Novelists of the Mid-Century.

Charlotte Brontë, Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot), Charles Kingsley, Anthony Trollope, Mrs. Gaskell, Charles Reade, Blackmore, Stevenson.

(1) The New Interests.

Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Charles Kingsley, Anthony Trollope, and Charles Reade all offered studies of the influences

shown by new interests. The principal of these were the religious discussions aroused by the Tractarianism of the Oxford Movement, the rise of the study of sciences, the greater attention paid to popular art, and the increase of education in proportion to the increase of population. A great expansion of trade was developed by railways and steam communication.

England, who for long had played no part in continental politics, regained, by the effect of the Crimean War, her former position among the European powers. The Indian Mutiny brought about the extinction of the East Indian Company, and the eventual taking over of the Indian Empire by Great Britain. The opening up of the Colonies offered an opportunity to those who sought for new homes.

(2) Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855).

Charlotte Brontë was born at about the beginning of these changes, in the year 1816. She was the daughter of the Rev. Patrick Brontë, of Irish blood, who belonged to a family originally named Prunty. He was vicar of a lonely village on the edge of the Yorkshire moors, his wife dying soon after the family had settled there, and leaving her husband as the sole guardian of the six young children.

Charlotte Brontë, when nine years old, was sent with two of her sisters to a school at Cowan's Bridge, not far from Leeds, founded for the daughters of poor clergy, where they seem to have received the treatment described in *Jane Eyre*. After the death of two Brontë girls, Charlotte, being herself very ill, was taken away and educated at home.

The three surviving sisters before long developed literary tastes, and Charlotte and Emily were sent to Brussels to receive a training for future work as governesses. In 1846 the sisters published a volume of *Poems*, by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, which preserved their initials and concealed their sex. Neither Charlotte nor Anne had much taste for verse. Emily Brontë's poems were marked with a certain amount of boldness in expression, without much originality. She delivered, as her opinion, that "vain are the thousand creeds," and predicted the rapid advent of a complete Pantheism. The poems were unsuccessful, and all the girls tried their fortune with fiction. Charlotte's *Professor* was declined by the publishers, and she set to work bravely on *Jane Eyre*. After long delays, it was accepted by Messrs. Smith and Elder; and brought out in 1847. *Shirley* appeared in 1849, and *Villette* in 1852. Two years after her last book, Charlotte married a clergyman, her father's curate, and died in the following year.

Her sisters' two novels, *Wuthering Heights*, written by Emily,

and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, by Annie Brontë, met with considerable success. They deal with the life led by the squires on the wild moorland fells, and are tales of great force, different from any others in English fiction. Emily's poems were far the best. *Agnes Grey*, written by Anne, is a pathetic picture of a governess's toils.

The really valuable parts of *Jane Eyre* are those dealing with Lowood, a place modelled upon the school of Charlotte Brontë's early days. Her autobiographical details are also interesting; the story itself is melodramatic and unreal. Jane goes to a certain Mr. Rochester, who lives at Thornfield, a lonely Yorkshire manorhouse, to act as governess to a little girl. His wife, a maniac, is concealed in the house, and Jane for a long time is unaware of her existence.

Jane meets with many trials and temptations, and is at last compelled to run away from Thornfield. She journeys on foot, without a penny in her pocket, for nearly three days. She is saved from starvation by kind people, who provide for her, and give her a means of livelihood. Then a sudden discovery is made, and she receives an unexpected legacy—enough to make her independent. Finally, her happiness is secured by a mysterious communication from Rochester, whose mad wife is dead, and who is living blind and alone. Jane hastens to him; there is a perfect reconciliation, and they are married without delay.

Charlotte Brontë's work came just at the time when the reading public had got tired of bad imitations of Scott, and when Thackeray had hardly made himself known. The modern novel of ordinary life had not appeared at all. Crude as *Jane Eyre* was, it gave the impression of the coming "of new genius and new style"; and was interesting, as being the product of Charlotte Brontë.

A power of self-study distinguished all her books. They give no representation of men and women of the world; for Charlotte Brontë only analysed the Brontës themselves, and the few people with whom they were acquainted. These descriptions of character were written in a no less vivid and natural way than her studies of the bleak Yorkshire hills. Charlotte Brontë found out her error in writing, when she tried to describe the daughter of a peer as staying for a few days at Thornfield, and only succeeded in producing a vulgar girl with ill-manners. She was soon brought to understand her mistake, and saw that she could not attempt the better-informed work of Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth. She realised the limits of her experience, and afterwards drew characteristic and faithful pictures of those she knew.

(3) Charles Kingsley (1819-1875).

A writer of a different type from either Charlotte Brontë or George Eliot was Charles Kingsley, the son of the vicar of Holne, in Devonshire, where he was born in 1819. He was educated at Magdalen College, Cambridge, and took a high degree. He was appointed curate of Eversley, in Hampshire, where he afterwards became rector in 1844. He then held the living for the rest of his life, and died there in 1875. He began his literary career with verse. The *Saint's Tragedy*, a drama dealing with St. Elizabeth of Hungary, needed restraint and compression; and was far surpassed by the *Andromeda* of a few years later. The best portions of this early work were his *Ballads*, remarkable for their strength and charm.

Kingsley believed very earnestly in the doctrines advocated by Carlyle; one result being the production, in 1849, of two novels, *Alton Locke* and *Yeast*, the first clearly showing a great development in Kingsley's capacity for prose. Both tales advocated the current ideas of Chartism, drawing vigorous pictures of the condition of the London poor. They were constantly imitated in later years, yet in no instance did the imitations attain to the merit of the original. The intrinsic value of their author's tone put them into an unassailable position.

Kingsley's next novel, *Hypatia*, was a brilliant book, from which the touch of immaturity had entirely disappeared. The tragedy of the tale was dignified and poetic, due to a great extent to the influence of Frederick Denison Maurice.

Westward Ho! a fascinating story of the days of Elizabeth, has been deemed Kingsley's most famous work. It is pervaded with a true feeling for chivalry and patriotism, and is remarkable for the excellent choice of its details, and for the skill with

Elizabeth, Princess of Hungary. Elizabeth, daughter of King Andrew the Second of Hungary, born in 1207, was famous at four years old for her beautiful face. The Count Palatine of Saxony, Landgraf of Thuringia, begged that she might be pledged to his little son. This proposal was accepted by the King of Hungary, and the two children were sent to a castle in Thuringia to be brought up together. All through her girlhood the Princess was distinguished for her charity and unselfishness; and by the poor, whom she helped as a friend, she was always spoken of as Saint Elizabeth. In her twentieth year she married the dear companion of her life, who was then King Louis the Fourth of Saxony. On his loss, for he fell in the Third Crusade, she retired to her castle of Marburg, and lived there, busy with good works, until her death, which came about when she was only twenty-four.

Hypatia, a beautiful lady of Alexandria, famous for both learning and beauty. All Alexandria respected, honoured, and took pride in her. Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, caused her to be dragged from her chariot, and torn limb from limb. This was done by Christians, on account of Hypatia being a follower of the philosophy of Plato.

which the story is told. Two more of his books are admirable. *The Water Babies*, of 1863, a medley of story and satire, is delightfully written, and full of most delicate fancy. *Hereward the Wake* is a romance of the last struggle of the Old English against the Normans; wherein the description of Torfrida, Hereward's wife—neglected by Hereward, yet faithful to him all his days—is touching and well drawn. Few scenes are so impressive as the last in the book, three days after the fatal fight at Bourne, when Torfrida dares to go into the midst of the Normans, and demand the surrender of her husband's corpse.

The charm and value of Kingsley's work rests upon the pure sincerity of Kingsley himself. A perfect specimen of the best type of Englishmen, he lived a true and honourable life. The influence he exercised over many was all the more powerful because it never seemed to be a conscious effort; it was the genuine expression of a manly and sympathetic nature.

(4) "George Eliot" (1819-1880).

Mary Ann Evans, the daughter of a land-steward to a country squire, became conspicuous, under the name of George Eliot, as a writer of novels during the twenty years from 1857. She was born in Warwickshire, and passed the first portion of her life on the English country-side, acquiring an ample knowledge of the farmers, tradesmen, and peasants who made up her surroundings. Her father, on resigning his post, moved into Coventry, where she made acquaintance with a body of Unitarians, who had gone so far in their tenets as to have given up Christianity. Miss Evans, accepting their doctrines, then undertook the translation of Strauss's *Leben Jesu* as a notification of her opinions. In 1849 she went to Geneva for purposes of study, returning to England in the following year, and writing for the *Westminster Review*. Before long she was helping to edit this journal, and occupied herself in more translations from the German. About this time she came into contact with a journalist, George Henry Lewes, who knew something of philosophy and something of science. A warm friendship, which lasted for many years, soon sprang up between them, and it seems entirely due to the influence of Lewes that Mary Ann Evans began to write fiction. Lewes was the author of some novels himself, which had not enjoyed much success. As a critic of literature he was accomplished and sound.

The *Scenes of Clerical Life* was in many respects the best piece of Miss Evans' writings, for she dealt only with those sections of the community to whom she herself belonged. Her

power of observation and humour was then considerable, not delicately refined like that of Jane Austen, but serviceable for her own purposes. The *Scenes of Clerical Life* was consequently the most characteristic of her books, and by far the most healthy; for there was in it a pathos and a sympathy that her later volumes do not show.

Adam Bede, published a year after the *Clerical Life*, was an attempt at a tragic story, the quality of its pathos being noticeably artificial. The same flaw can be seen in *The Mill on the Floss* of 1860, though an improvement was to be found in *Silas Marner*; and to all these early books her own experiences gave a touch of reality, absent to a great extent from the work of her maturer years.

Her subjects in those years were not very wisely chosen. As she said herself with regard to the writing of *Romola*, which came out in 1863, "she was a young woman when she began the book, and an old one when she finished it." The book is full of learning, but as a story lacks in life and animation. There is no creation of character, for that gift did not belong to Miss Evans; there is not even the observation of the early tales. In *Romola* she dealt with conditions of a life which were foreign to her; and as the book was compiled with infinite pains from masses of others, it was deficient in originality.

Felix Holt, in 1866, has some fine characters and good scenes, though it does not as a whole come to the level of *Silas Marner*, or even *Adam Bede*. *Middlemarch*, of five years later, is the longest and most crowded of her books, rendered unpleasant by the incessant talk of dull men and women. Miss Evans went back in some ways to the method of her earlier books, though it was not handled with the same result.

Daniel Deronda affected her reputation still more, and a reaction against her work set in from the time of its publication. This feeling was not removed by the *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, a book very badly received. Miss Evans died in 1880, and her *Letters* were subsequently published; they were wanting in interest, and disappointed even her admirers.

Middlemarch, which has been described as "George Eliot's criticism of humanity," falls into four distinct stories. One is of a young woman, Rosamond Vincy, who is called "a woman of the world," so far, that is, as the world is represented by a small provincial town. She marries a local doctor with a precarious practice, and regardless of her husband's difficulties leads a life of great extravagance. By her persistent will the spirit of the husband is disheartened and finally broken.

Another story deals with a banker in the town, a Mr. Bulstrode, who is supposed to have been intended to represent a victim of Nemesis. Knowing himself that he is dishonest, he satisfies his conscience by spiritual reflections and religious observances. He is regarded as a hypocrite to himself rather than one who deceives his neighbours.

The Garth family are more true to life than any other characters in the book. Caleb Garth is said to have been a study of Miss Evans' father, and the Garths' household of the domestic arrangements of the Evans family. Caleb Garth, originally a builder, had become bankrupt, and took up work as a surveyor, valuer, or agent. The story of the Garths relates their struggles, and the eventual marriage of Fred Vincy, brother of Rosamond, and Mary Garth. Fred's selfishness is "not so much overcome by the marriage as expanded by the enlargement of its limits to include another."

The story of Dorothea's impossible engagement and miserable marriage seems, according to a recent volume of literary reminiscences, to show that her devotion was based on a personal experience of Miss Evans.

In this section of *Middlemarch*, however, Miss Evans fell into the same mistake as Richardson. The representations of Mr. Brooke, a country squire and Dorothea's uncle and guardian, and of Sir James Chettam, Mr. Brooke's friend, are sheer travesties. Will Ladislaw, supposed to be brilliant and attractive, is merely vulgar. The picture drawn of Dorothea, if meant for a description of an English lady, is ridiculous and incorrect.

Miss Evans was never a writer of romance; the difference between her and the greater novelists being caused by her lack of any natural capacity for story-telling. Both Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth wrote in their young days; Charlotte Brontë seldom published made-up stories after her childhood. Sir Walter Scott began later in life, yet he started with *Waverley*, at the age of thirty-four. Lord Lytton, Dickens, and Trollope were all able to invent in quite their early years. Miss Evans was thirty-nine when her first sketches were published, and was not known as a novelist until she was past forty. Her shorter and simpler books were necessarily the most popular; *Silas Marner* occupying no more space than one-fifth of *Middlemarch*. Miss Evans' anxiety in writing often brought about a style too elaborate to be effective. The story of *Silas Marner* describes a solitary old man, softened by the love of an affectionate child. Miss Evans called it, in her preface, an attempt "to set, in a strong light, the remedial influences of pure, natural, human relations." *Adam Bede*, in some respects a

better developed work, is the least depressing of Miss Evans' writings. The interest of *The Mill on the Floss* centres round the description of the author's own life. *Daniel Deronda* took as its basis the delight of a young Englishman at finding out that he was really a Jew.

In 1878 she married a Mr. Cross, and in 1880 she died. The criticism of the present day does not give her a place higher than in the second division of writers. Her notoriety existed for a few years from 1871, and since then has greatly diminished.

(5) Mrs. Trollope, and her Family. Anthony Trollope (1815-1882.)

Anthony Trollope belonged to a literary family. His father, a barrister, and a Fellow of New College, Oxford, worked for years at an Encyclopædia Ecclesiastica, in which he attempted to describe every known ecclesiastical term. Anthony's brother did much literary work, writing a number of novels and a greater quantity of Italian history. Anthony's sister, Mrs. Tilley, also wrote one excellent novel, entitled *Chollerton*; and his mother, Mrs. Trollope, was one of the most prolific novelists of her day. She obtained a great reputation as a bright and clever writer; her best story being *The Widow Barnaby*, which, with its sequels, was extremely popular. She also brought out a brilliant account of the *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, which she had observed during an enforced residence of three years at Cincinnati.

Her London publisher paid her four hundred pounds for this book; and although she was then fifty years of age, she continued writing until 1856. Mrs. Trollope died in 1863; and her mantle fell on the shoulders of Anthony, who had made his first success eight years before. Mrs. Trollope was a woman of great creative power, with a genuine feeling for romance and a keen sense of humour. This last gift was strongly inherited by Anthony, who owed a great deal to his mother's influence.

He passed a most unhappy boyhood, as is told in his *Autobiography*, a frank and charming book, which appeared almost immediately after his death. He was sent in a desultory way to both Winchester and Harrow; removed from both schools for lack of money on the part of his parents; and never obtaining any proper education at all. When he was nineteen, his mother obtained for him a clerkship in the Secretary's office at the General Post Office in 1834. At the Post Office he remained for thirty-three years, rising to be one of the most useful of the higher officials. In 1867, when the office of Under-Secretary

became vacant, Trollope applied for it; but as the appointment was elsewhere bestowed, it seemed wise to him to resign and devote all his time to writing. This he did with considerable success until his death in 1882.

For fourteen years Trollope acted as a deputy-inspector of country post-offices in Ireland, when he had opportunities of seeing many quaint and melancholy aspects of Irish life; the latter culminating in his experiences during the famine and pestilence of 1847 and 1848. Three years later a scheme was set on foot for improving the delivery of letters in rural districts. Trollope did the work in his Irish district, and was then summoned to England, and commissioned to survey ten English counties, six Welsh counties, and the Channel Islands. This gave him a minute knowledge of a large part of England, which stood him in good stead when writing his tales. It was in the course of this work that, on visiting Salisbury and wandering one evening round the cathedral, the idea for a story came into Trollope's mind; and developing into *The Warden*, led the way for the series of Barsetshire novels, the best of Trollope's fiction.

His work at the Post Office kept him from writing, and it was a year before he could put the first chapter of *The Warden* on paper. Then he was hurried away from England to take charge of the northern counties of Ireland, the whole of Ulster, and the counties of Meath and Louth; and not until the end of 1852 could he start on *The Warden* again. It was finished in the autumn of 1853; and the sale proved that it had been more successful than any other of Trollope's stories. *Barchester Towers* came out in the same year, most of it having been written in pencil by Trollope during his railway journeys. It was an interesting story of clerical life; and was regarded as the best novel that Trollope had so far produced. *The Three Clerks* treated in a similar way the special peculiarities of the Civil Service. Trollope was indebted to his brother for the plot of *Dr. Thorne*, which was sold for four hundred pounds; and obtained the largest sale of all.

Framley Parsonage, in 1859, went back to the clerical element which had begun in *Dr. Thorne* and *Barchester Towers*. The parsonage was placed in the neighbourhood of Barchester, so that some of the characters of *Barchester Towers*—the bishop's wife and the archdeacon—could be brought in again. *Framley Parsonage* was a thoroughly English story. There was some fox-hunting, and a little tuft-hunting; no heroism, and no villainy. There was a good deal of church, but more love-making; and it was straightforward, honest love; each of the young couple longed for the other, and was not ashamed to say

so. How dear Trollope's work was to him is shown by his own words in his *Autobiography*, when, speaking of *Framley Parsonage*, he declares, "As I wrote it, I became more closely acquainted with the new shire which I had added to the English counties. I had it all in my mind—its roads and railroads, its towns and parishes, its members of Parliament, and the different hunts which rode over it. I knew all the great lords and their castles, the squires and their parks, the rectors and their churches. This was the fourth novel of which I had placed the scene in Barsetshire, and as I wrote it, I made a map of the dear county. Throughout these stories there has been no name given to a fictitious site which does not represent to me a spot of which I know all the accessories, as though I had lived and wandered there."

The most popular of the remainder of Trollope's works was *Orley Farm*, an admirable picture of a side of English life different from the clerical studies of the Barchester tales. *The Small House of Allington* was another thoroughly English story, with a delightful study of an unaffected and loveable English girl. While the book was in course of publication, Lily Dale won the hearts of all its readers; and Trollope was deluged with readers begging him to give her a happy fate.

There appeared for the first time in *Can You Forgive Her?* a character with whom Trollope took great pains. This was the Lady Glencora, wife to Plantagenet Palliser, the nephew and heir of the Duke of Omnium. Mr. Palliser was mentioned in *Dr. Thorne*, *Framley Parsonage*, and *The Small House at Allington*, but so far his character had only been lightly sketched. Trollope now began to draw it out in detail, and enriched his book with a perfect picture of an English gentleman. The difficult question as to the happiness of Lady Glencora with her husband is managed in the kindest and tenderest way. The studies of the two characters should be followed up in the other novels of *Phineas Finn*, an excellent story; and of the *Prime Minister*, the story of Plantagenet Palliser when he has come into his dukedom, and is holding high office. The series closes with the happiness of his later married life, when the Duchess has come to understand and appreciate him.

The Last Chronicle of Barset gives the finale of the Barsetshire stories, and in some respects surpasses *Barchester Towers*. The value of Trollope's work lies in the truthfulness of his representations. He was one of the few writers of fiction who could correctly depict the manners and methods of life among the English gentry. In this respect he stands almost on the same level with Miss Austen and Thackeray, though he dealt with many classes quite unknown to Miss Austen, and not depicted

to any great extent by Thackeray. Hence the touch of the first two was finer than Trollope's, and though the tone of his books was always sweet and wholesome, his pen got occasionally a little rough in style. Trollope never used phrases that were artificial or obscure ; in easy grace he was often near to Jane Austen. A wonderful charm runs through nearly all his stories, for few writers have understood or described women so well.

(6) Charles Reade (1814-1884).

A short note must be added with regard to Charles Reade, a writer of excellent novels and bad plays. His ambition was to be known as a dramatist, while his work as the author of romantic tales far surpassed anything he could do for the stage. In 1853 he brought out his charming novel of *Peg Woffington*, the famous actress in the days of Garrick and Johnson, and followed it in the same year with his pathetic tale of *Christie Johnstone*, a vivid and accurate description of the fisher-folk on the east coast of Scotland. Eight years later he wrote his last, better even than these two. *The Cloister and the Hearth*, as it was called, gave a fascinating account of the adventures of a young man who had to journey, in the fifteenth century, from the Low Countries into Italy. His subsequent experiences in Italy were somewhat tedious, but the scenes of cottage life in Holland, as a contrast to the trials and perils of the journey, stand out in bold relief and form one of the prominent features of the whole. A delightful character—of a Burgundian soldier—who makes the acquaintance of Gerard, the hero of the book, and travels with him for many miles, adds to the merriment of the tale. Whenever Gerard and he get into difficulties, Denys has one cry of consolation—"Courage, mon camarade, le diable est mort!"

(7) Mrs. Gaskell (1810-1865).

Mrs. Gaskell, the most intimate friend of Charlotte Brontë, had a pretty skill in writing, first shown by a pathetic tale of Manchester life, called after its heroine, *Mary Barton*. The power and feeling shown in this story were more highly developed in *Cranford*. This was a series of graceful sketches, depicting the inhabitants of a little country village and their surroundings. Mrs. Gaskell had a pleasant and graceful style not quite touching Miss Austen's or even Miss Mitford's ; yet showing a real acquaintance with large towns and small, with the country squires and the village folk, and with the rustics at the cottages and farms. The sketches were written in a sympathetic tone, for she was a woman who looked upon her fellow-creatures with kindly eyes ; and was always ready to depict

their merits rather than their faults. Her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, one of the most charming biographies, is remarkable for the manner by which Mrs. Gaskell's sweet nature enabled her to see the good that underlay the somewhat rough exterior of her friend.

(8) R. L. Stevenson (1850-1894).

Robert Louis Stevenson, born in 1850, and dying in Samoa of consumption in 1894, wrote two volumes of quaint experiences, *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*; then two volumes of *Essays*; and finally, for his first period, *The New Arabian Nights*, a book which holds a place among genuine Romance. These, with *Treasure Island*, were all written before 1883. The work of his remaining years produced *A Child's Garden of Verse*, *Prince Otto*, *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Kidnapped*, *Catriona*, its second part, and *The Master of Ballantrae*. They were distinguished by a style over which he took infinite pains; working hard at it until, in *Treasure Island*, he had mastered it to his satisfaction. Stevenson had made a distinct study of prose, rather than attempting to write as his instinct would have led him. He was martyred to the doctrine of the last part of the nineteenth century, the mistaken outcome of the Romantic movement. The wise classical spirit of Collins and Gray enabled them to combine the polish of Greek and Latin poets with their own ideas; while Romantic influences in England merely brought about attempts which were masses of artificiality. Stevenson developed a mannerism which was often too obvious; he was able, before the end, to make it something which no one else could do, and yet could never clear it from visible traces of his toil in its production. The grace and ease of Thackeray was wanting, and the frequent loose writing of Scott was often far pleasanter to read. *The New Arabian Nights* was undoubtedly his best in style. Then he learnt his quaint English, and let it become his master; but, with all his faults, he was the last great novelist of the century.

(9) R. D. Blackmore (1825-1900).

It is a sad coincidence that the deaths of two eminent men of letters, Ruskin and Blackmore, should have to be recorded as taking place on the same day in the first month in the completing year of the nineteenth century. Mr. Richard Doddridge Blackmore, the son of a clergyman, claimed descent from Dr. Doddridge, a Nonconformist divine and a celebrated hymn-writer. Mr. Blackmore was called to the Bar in 1852, and soon gave up law for literature. His first two novels did not enjoy much success; but *Lorna Doon*, his third, in 1869 made him

a most popular novelist. The book is fortunately too well known to need any remarks. It should be noticed how Mr. Blackmore, though not equal in strength to Sir Walter Scott, was entirely with him in putting his books into pure and wholesome shape, a merit which places them side by side as types of gentle and honourable men.

90. Summary of the Reign.

(1) Tennyson's Work—The Difference from Wordsworth.

The note struck by Tennyson is essentially the note of the earlier nineteenth century, and did not create a school, but followed the steps of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats. Though the metaphysical vein which crept into Tennyson's poems marked the changing of the age, and showed a point of divergence from the natural theology of Wordsworth, Tennyson will be remembered not so much as the poet of the mind, as the master of exquisite phrase; as the conscientious artist, who strove for perfection of expression; as the sweet singer, who did all within his power to cultivate his natural gift.

(2) Robert Browning—The Difference from the Classical School.

Browning, entrusted with different talents and working on different methods, left behind him thirty volumes of verse; and will apparently be remembered by his lyrics. He had too strong an intellect to be swayed to and fro by the varying conflicts of the age; his temperament, keen and sensible, was so healthy as to keep him from unwarrantable hopes, attended by inevitable failure. Hence arose the difference between Browning and the school represented, on its rougher side by Clough, and on its more polished side by Matthew Arnold. The peculiar circumstances, with its many movements and few conspicuous results, made life appear unreal to sensitive people. Clough and Arnold were both dissatisfied with their environments, and could never manage to escape from them. They had not learnt, like Carlyle, the secret of the Everlasting No! (see p. 492). They beat their wings against the bars of their cages, conveying the feeling that even if they did obtain their freedom, it would hardly be worth their while to accept it.

(3) The Romancists in Poetry.

Opposed to the Classical School in every way was that of the Romancists, of which Dante Rossetti may be taken as the leader. Frankly ignoring the world that surrounded them, they declared the whole pleasure of life to be the gratification of the artistic capacities; and their methods sometimes laid them open to blame. They did much, however, to prevent poetry from

being absolutely extinguished by a material age. The work of two of their company was fortunately without reproach. Christina Rossetti added to her command over words, and to her beauty of thought, a sense of the hopeful side of the problem of the Infinite. In this respect she was raised far above either William Morris or her brother.

To Morris had been granted the gift of a languid, but beautiful verse, which in some respects is the nearest to Chaucer that later generations have known. If Morris had not the same dramatic insight into character, he possessed a perhaps stronger sense of colour and form. His liking for vague theories, which led to the production of much inferior work, does not detract from the good qualities of his best poetry.

4. Fiction.

The art of fiction seems to be in much the same condition as the art of poetry. From the days of Thackeray and Dickens to the days of the problem novel, the descent was steep and dreary. The earlier and middle years of the reign showed a power of creative imagination, after which, recent years have toiled in vain. This is probably due to a morbid discontent which has spread among certain sections of the community; and a good deal of the later modern fiction appears to be the production of dissatisfied people, uncertain of their own positions. The thousands of new readers who devour contemporary fiction have seldom grounded themselves in genuine literature; and it is a dangerous thing to be wanting in a knowledge of Thackeray and Scott, in order to form a literary taste upon *Gemini Cœlestes*, or *Satanæ Maestitiæ*.

Yet one point persistently recurs, when we think of the mass of printed matter produced during the last few years. Some books are so marked with the originality of genius, that we can tell from the first that they will make part of the heritage of our nation. They are books of which it is impossible to weary; in which every reading reveals fresh beauties, or rejoices one again with a familiar joy. They have become part of our lives; the personages in them are nearer and more real to us than many of our ordinary acquaintances. *Pride and Prejudice*, *Rob Roy*, *Red Gauntlet*, *The Antiquary*, *Pickwick*, *Jane Eyre*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Newcomes*, and *Esmond*, all make part of a glorious list. How many works of fiction written during the last quarter of the century will ever receive the same reward?

(5) John Ruskin.

One name, however, remains too great to be overlooked, too unique and self-contained to be classed with any others. It

was given to John Ruskin to open the eyes of his fellows as, in many cases, they had never been opened before; and made them realise how much of beauty and worth lay round them even in the dullest of every-day worlds. This task was accomplished largely through the medium of an impassioned style, recalling much of the music and stateliness of the older prose.

Ruskin has been well described as "a great teacher of Righteousness"; all work, however humble, must be done faithfully and lovingly—that was his fundamental rule. Work was only a curse or a shame, when there was a knowledge that it was bad, and it was passed off as good.

His attitude with regard to art and literature rested on this same basis. He maintained in art the necessary connection between the beautiful and the true. In the beautiful picture, as in the beautiful life, each line was to be drawn with anxious and affectionate care. Art was not, in his eyes, Religion; though the highest and best Art was religious.

Ruskin ranks as one of the great masters in English literature; and, so long as any love for English books endures, will be remembered and honoured for both his matter and his style. He says of himself that he has written "frankly, garrulously, and at ease." He was eloquent in his use of words, yet never lost sight of clearness and simplicity. As a word-painter and a master of word-music, he stands almost alone. Whatever he describes—either the grandeur of a great building under the skies of Italy, or the details of the simplest natural beauty in England—the description in each is delicate and accurate, expressed in the fewest and most ordinary words, which only Ruskin would have thought of using. The periods of his writing flow like a broad stream; and few can know how their effect has been produced. Ruskin himself has let us into the secret; he had developed "the habit of fixed attention with both eyes and mind, and felt as he saw. He realised that to feel keenly was the first and most important step towards obtaining a power of happy wording"; and this, combined with his natural love for beauty and his vivid imagination, made him the best writer of English for the last half of the nineteenth century. His prose showed a wonderful skill in metaphor, and a use of the simplest and most natural words. And it should always be remembered that the explanation of this style is that the text-book of his childhood was the Bible.

91. A Note of Forecast.

At this point our book has to be brought to its conclusion. It is probable that in the coming century the principal features

of the Victorian age will be more defined, and that its persistent inquiry into theological, scientific, and historical subjects will be most discussed; while a due recognition will be made of the cultivated tone in much of its poetry and prose.

Time, working with leisurely hands, will sift out from the masses of production such portions as are deemed fit for remembrance; and it is beyond doubt that subsequent generations, when they turn to the poetry, the prose, historical or scientific, and the fiction of the Victorian age, will add their admiration to the honour and praise that the principal writers of the nineteenth century had earned so well.

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